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THE

WORKS

OF

THE LATE REVEREND AND PIOUS

MR. THOMAS GOUGE,

Minister of the Gospel, St. Sepulchres, London.

IN SIX PARTS.

I. A Word to Sinners, and a Word to Saints: or, The Nature and Necessity of Regeneration, and the New Birth, from *John* iii. 2, 3.

II. Christian Directions, shewing how to walk with God all day long.

III. The Christian Householder, wherein are many useful Directions for Parents and Masters of Families, from *Joshua* xxiv. 15.

IV. The Young Man's Guide through the Wilderness of this World, to the heavenly Canaan; shewing him how to carry himself Christian-like in the whole course of his Life, from *Ecclesiastes* xii. 1.

V. The Principles of the Christian Religion explained to the meanest; with practical Applications to each Head.

VI. The surest and safest Way of Thriving, from *Matth.* x. 41, 42.

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN ACCOUNT OF THE AUTHOR's LIFE.

ALBANY:

PUBLISHED BY GEORGE LINDSAY.

E. & E. Hosford....Printers.

1815.

PRINCETON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

AN

ACCOUNT

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARITABLE DEEDS,

OF THE

AUTHOR.

MR. THOMAS GOUGE, late Minister of the gospel at St. Sepulchres in London, was born at Bow near Stratford, in the county of Middlesex, the 19th day of September 1605, eldest son to that learned Divine, Dr. William Gouge, late pastor of Black-Friars in London, who also was member of that Assembly of Divines at Westminster, which composed our Confession of Faith, and Larger and Shorter Catechisms. He was a man eminent, as in other graces, so in this of charity, especially to the household of faith. He maintained some poor scholars in the university, wholly at his own charge ; and contributed liberally towards the maintenance of others. He set apart a sacred stock, (as he called it) a portion for the poor, proportionable to his incomes, which also he faithfully distributed. He used to say, That the tenth part of a rich man's estate was a fit proportion to be devoted to God for charitable uses : but himself, as his son tells us, he collected from his own papers, gave the seventh part of all his yearly comings-in, towards the maintaining poor scholars at the university and the relieving poor families and distressed persons. And how wonderfully God blessed, as his ministry, so his outward estate, is so well known to all who lived in his days, that (as his son saith) it is needless to say any thing of it : only there may be truly applied to him the words of the Psalmist, *He is ever merciful and lending ; and his seed is blessed.* A little before his death, after three days illness, he complained, Alas ! I have lost three days ; and, to a friend visiting him, I am willing to die, having, I bless God, nothing to do but to die : And to his sister, being afraid to leave him alone, Why sister, said he, I shall, I am sure, be with Christ when I die : which he did, December 12th, 1653, aged 79.

This his worthy son Mr. Thomas Gouge, was bred at Eaton school ; and from thence chosen to King's College in Cambridge, being about 20 years of age : and in the year 1626, after he had finished the course of his studies, and taken his degrees, he left the university and his fellowship, being presented to the living of Colsden, near Croyden in Surrey, where he continued about two or three years ; and from thence was removed to St. Sepulchres in London, in the year 1638 : and the year after, thinking fit to change his condition, matched into a very worthy and ancient family, marrying one of the daughters of Sir Robert Darcy.

Being thus settled in this large and populous parish St. Sepulchres, he did, with great solicitude and pains, discharge all the parts of a vigilant and faithful minister, for about the space of 24 years. For, besides his constant and weekly labour of preaching, he was very diligent and charitable, in visiting the sick ; and ministring not only spiritual counsel and comfort to them, but likewise liberal relief to the wants and necessities of those that were poor, and destitute of means to help themselves in that condition. He did also every morning throughout the year catechise in the church, especially the poorer sort, who were generally most ignorant ; and to encourage them to come thither to be instructed by him, he did once a week distribute money among them, not upon a certain day, but changing it on purpose as he thought good, that he might thereby oblige them to be constantly present : these were chiefly the more aged poor, who being past labour,

had leisure enough to attend upon this exercise. As for the other sort of poor, who were able to work for their living, he set them at work upon his own charge; buying flax and hemp for them to spin; and what they spun he took off their hands, paying them for their work; and then got it wrought into cloth, and sold it as he could, chiefly among his friends, himself bearing the whole loss. And this was a very wise and well chosen way of charity; and, in the good effect of it, a much greater charity, than if he had given these very persons freely, and for nothing, so much as they earned by their work, because by this means, he took many off from begging, and thereby rescued them at once from two of the most dangerous temptations of this world, idleness and poverty; and by degrees reclaimed them to a virtuous and industrious course of life, which enabled them afterwards to live without being beholden to the charity of others.

But to pass over many things worthy to be remembered of him; and to speak only of these virtues of his which were more eminent and remarkable.

Of his piety towards God, which is the necessary foundation of all other graces and virtues, I shall only say this, that it was great and exemplary, but yet very still and quiet, without stir and noise, and much more in substance and reality, than in shew and ostentation; and did not consist in censuring and finding fault with others, but in the due care and government of his own life and actions, and exercising himself continually to have a conscience void of offence toward God and toward man; in which he was such a proficient. One saith, That after long acquaintance and familiar conversation with him, it was not easy to observe any thing that might deserve blame. Mr. Baxter says, That he never heard any one person, of what rank, sort, or sect soever, speak one word to his dishonour, or name any fault that they charged on his life or doctrine; no not the highest prelatists themselves, save only that he conformed not to their impositions.

He particularly excelled in the more peculiar virtues of conversation, in modesty, humility, meekness, cheerfulness, and in kindness and charity towards all men.

So great was his modesty, that it never appeared either by word or action that he put any value upon himself. This hath been often observed in him, that the charities which were procured chiefly by his application and industry, when he had occasion to give an account of them, that he would rather impute it to any one who had but the least hand and part in the obtaining of them, than assume any thing of it to himself.

He was clothed with humility, and had in a most eminent degree that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which St. Peter says, 'is in the sight of God of so great price:' so that there was not the least appearance either of pride, or passion in any of his words or actions. He was not only free from anger and bitterness, but from all affected gravity and moroseness. His conversation was affable and pleasant: he had a wonderful serenity of mind and evenness of temper, visible in his very countenance; he was hardly ever merry, but never melancholy and sad. Mr. Baxter says, He never saw him sad but cheerful. He was upon all occasions and accidents perpetually the same, always cheerful, and always kind; of a disposition ready to embrace and oblige all men; allowing others to differ from him, even in opinions that were very dear to him; and provided men did but fear God, and work righteousness, he loved them heartily, how distant soever from him in judgment about things less necessary: in all which he is very worthy to be a pattern for men of all persuasions whatsoever.

But that virtue which of all others shone brightest in him, and was his most proper and peculiar character, was his cheerful and unwearied diligence in acts of pious charity. And had a singular sagacity and prudence in devising the most effectual ways of doing good, and in managing and disposing his charity to the best purposes, and to the greatest extent; always, if it were possible, making it to serve some good end of piety and religion, as the instruction of poor children in the principles of religion; and furnishing grown persons that were ignorant, with the Bible and other good books; strictly obliging those to whom he gave them, to a diligent reading of them; and when he had opportunity, exacting of them an account how they had profited by them.

In his occasional alms to the poor, in which he was very free and bountiful, the

relief he gave them, was always mingled with good counsel, and as great a tenderness and compassion for their souls as for their bodies; which very often attained the good effect it was likely to have, the one making way for the other, with so much advantage, and men being very apt to follow the good advice of those who gave them in hand so sensible a pledge and testimony of their good-will to them.

This kind of charity must needs be very expensive to him, but he had a plentiful estate settled upon him, and left him by his father; and he laid it out as liberally in the most prudent and effectual ways of charity he could think of, and upon such persons as, all circumstances considered, he judged to be the fittest and most proper objects of it.

Another instance of his remarkable zeal and charity in propagating religion, was when he was ejected or silenced from preaching in the year 1662, and had quitted his living of St. Sepulchres, upon dissatisfaction about the terms of Conformity. He then having a compassion for those parts of Wales, which were distressed with ignorance, and wanted means of knowledge, made a journey into South Wales; and in every town where he came, he enquired what poor people there were, that had any children, whom they were willing to have taught English, and to read and write, and to learn the Catechism: and when he met with a competent number, he enquired for fit persons to instruct them; a man for the boys, and a woman for the girls; and agreed with them for a penny, or two pence a week, which he undertook to pay.

Mr. Edmond Calamy, saith, "When he had lost much by the fire, and had settled his children, and had his wife taken from him by death, he had but about one hundred and fifty pounds a year left, and he gave a hundred of it to charitable uses. It was his daily work to do all the good he could, with as great diligence and constancy, as other men labour at their trades. He visited the poor, and stirred up the rich in whom he had any interest, to devote at least the tenth part of their estates to works of charity."

Dr. John Owen, saith, "That he was a person eminently suited unto that work he was called unto. For whereas he was deprived of all outward advantages, (as well as many others) not only of encreasing his wealth in the world, but of ordinary supplies for himself, and family, beyond his peculiar patrimony, he abundantly manifested himself to have lived in the faith of that truth, which he endeavoured to implant on the minds and consciences of others; and did but invite men into the same belief and practice with himself."

Mr. Thomas Manton, saith, "That he was a meet advocate for so good a cause, for we willingly hear every man in his own faculty, none so fit to exhort others to charity, as those that are eminently charitable themselves. When he was between sixty and seventy years old, he used to travel into Wales, and dispers what money he could spare himself, or collect from others, among the poor persecuted ministers there. He settled, in the chief towns of Wales a great many schools, to the number of three or four hundred, for women to teach children to read, having himself undertaken to pay them for many hundred children. He preached in Wales till they drove him from place to place by persecution. He went constantly to the parish churches, and sometimes communicated with them; and was authorized by an old university-license to preach occasionally; and yet for so doing, was excommunicated even in Wales, and that while he was doing all this good."

One saith, "That for about nine or ten years before his death, he did almost wholly apply his charity to Wales, because there he judged was most occasion for it: And, because this was a very great work, he did not only lay out upon it whatever he could spare out of his own estate; but employed his whole time and pains to excite and engage the charity of others for his assistance in it.

"And in this he had two excellent designs: One, to have poor children brought up to read and write, and to be carefully instructed in the principles of religion: The other, to furnish persons of grown age, the poor especially, with the necessary helps and means of knowledge, as the Bible, and other books of piety and devotion, in their own language; to which end he procured the Church Catechism, the Practice of Piety, and the whole Duty of Man; besides several other

pious and useful books, some of them to be translated into the Welch tongue; and great numbers of them, all to be printed, and sent down to the chief towns in Wales, to be sold at easy rates to those that were able to buy them, and to be freely given to those that were not.

"And in both these designs, through the blessing of God upon his unwearied endeavours, he found very great success. For, by the large and bountiful contributions, which chiefly by his industry and prudent application, were obtained from charitable persons of all ranks and conditions, from the nobility and gentry of Wales, and the neighbouring counties, and several of that quality in and about London; and from that perpetual fountain of charity the city of London, led on and encouraged by the most bountiful example of the right honourable the lord Mayor, and the court of aldermen; to all which he constantly added two thirds of his own estate: I say, by all these together, there were every year eight hundred, sometimes a thousand poor children educated, as I said before; and by this example, several of the most considerable towns of Wales, were excited to bring up at their own charge the like number of poor children in the like manner, and under his inspection and care.

"He likewise gave very great numbers of the books above mentioned, both in the Welch and English tongues, to the poorer sort, so many as were unable to buy them, and willing to read them. But which was the greatest work of all, and amounted indeed to a mighty charge, he procured a new and fair impression of the Bible in the Welch tongue, to the number of eight thousand, one thousand whereof were freely given to the poor; and the rest were sent to the principal cities and towns in Wales, to be sold to the rich at very reasonable and low rates, viz. at four shillings a piece, well bound and clasped, which was much cheaper than any English Bible, was ever sold, that was of so fair a print and paper; a work of that charge, that it was not likely to have been done any other way: and for which this age, and perhaps the next, will have great cause to thank God on his behalf.

"He was used to say often with pleasure, that he had two livings, which he would not exchange for two of the greatest in England, meaning Wales, where he used to travel every year to spread knowledge, piety, and charity; and Christ's Hospital, where he used freely to catechise the poor children, in order to the well laying the foundations of religion in them in their tender years.

I shall here subjoin an account of his charities in Wales for one year, by which some judgment may be made, as to the rest. It was in the year 1674, before his excellent impression of the British Bible, in the Welch tongue; it was printed about that time in a single sheet, which is apt to be lost: whereas it is a pity, but it should be preserved to posterity: it was in these words, An account of what hath been done in Wales this last year, from Midsummer 1674, to March 25th 1675, in pursuance of the above trust, upon the encouragement of divers worthy persons, to this pious and charitable design.

1. In fifty-one of the chief towns of Wales, 812 poor children have been, and are put to school, to learn English over and above the 500 put to school the last year by the charity of others, before this trust began.

2. There have been bought and distributed in several families, 32 Welch Bibles, which were all that could be had in Wales or London.

3. There were 240 New Testaments in Welch, to be given away to the poor people, that can read Welch.

4. And 500 Whole Duties of Man in Welch, to be distributed in like manner.

All which pious and charitable undertaking, hath already provoked divers of the better sort of the Welch, to put above 500 of the poorest Welch children to school, upon their account. So that about 1850 in all, are already put to school to learn to read English: Attested by us,

Matthew Pool,	Thomas Firmin,	Thomas Gouge,
William Durham,	Edward Stillingfleet,	John Meriton,
John Tillotson,	Benjamin Whitchcot,	Simon Ford.

In these good works, he employed all his time and care, and pains, and his whole heart was in them, so that he was very little affected with any thing else;

and seldom minded or knew any thing of the strange occurrences of this troublesome and busy age, such as I think are hardly to be paralleled in any other: or, if he did mind them, he scarce ever spake any thing about them. For this was the business he laid to heart; and knowing it to be so much and so certainly the will of his heavenly Father, it was his meat and drink to be doing of it: And the good success he had in it was a continual feast to him; and gave him a perpetual serenity both of mind and countenance. His great love and zeal for this work, made all the pains and difficulties of it seem nothing to him: He would rise early and sit up late, and continued in the same diligence and industry to the last, though he was in the threescore and seventeenth year of his age. And, that he might manage the distribution of his great charity with his own hands, and see the good effects of it with his own eyes, he always once, but usually twice a year, at his own charge, travelled over a great part of Wales, none of the best countries to travel in: But, for the love of God and men, he endured all that, together with the extremity of heat and cold, (which in their several seasons are both very great there) not only with patience, but with pleasure. So that, all things considered, there have not, since the primitive times of Christianity, been many among the sons of men, to whom that glorious character of the Son of God might be better applied, *that he went about doing good.*

He died in the 77th year of his age, October 29th, 1681. It so pleased God, that his death was very sudden; and so sudden, that in all probability, he himself hardly perceived it when it happened; for he died in his sleep, without any sickness or pain, or fear of death; he was heard to give a groan in his sleep, and he was gone: so that we may say of him, as it is said of David, *after he had served his generation, according to the will of God, he fell asleep.*

TO MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS, THE INHABITANTS OF ST. SEPULCHRES, PARISH, LONDON.

Beloved Friends,

TO further the salvation of men's souls, as it is a most excellent work; so, it ought to be the study, and endeavour both of every Christian in his place and calling, and especially of the ministers of the gospel, whose office and function calls on them more importunately to labor therein. Now, since *regeneration is absolutely necessary to salvation;* and that there can be no entrance into the *new Jerusalem* without a *new birth;* I have according to that ability which the Lord hath given me, set forth, in this small Treatise, the nature and necessity of regeneration, together with the *means* on your part to be performed for the better attaining thereunto.

Most of these truths have been preached in your hearing, and now they are presented to your sight; that thereby you may be put in remembrance of them, and more thoroughly affected with them. Though I cease to be your minister, yet, I shall not cease to do what in me lieth, to further your eternal happiness. It was my hearty desire of your everlasting welfare, that first put me upon preaching on this subject: and the like desire hath engaged me to present the same to your view.

Herein have I set before you heaven and hell, happiness and misery. Oh that you would but be so wise as to chuse heaven, rather than hell, happiness, rather than misery!

That I should adventure these notes into the world, is not out of any conceit, that there is any thing extraordinary in them; but merely out of that strong affection I bear to your soul's welfare, *For my heart's desire is, that you may be saved;* and, will the Lord but bless this small Treatise to the regeneration, or edification of any of your souls, I have the end of all my pains and cost.

Avoiding all affectation of words, I have used plainness of speech: it being always my chief design in the whole course of my ministry, to affect the hearts and consciences of my hearers, rather than tickle their ears, and please their fancy.

That I may not detain you longer; I shall close this epistle, with three requests unto you.

1. That you kindly accept of this small book, which treats on a subject so necessary to your everlasting happiness.

2. That you would be pleased, as to peruse it yourselves, so take some time to read it to your families. If you cannot find leisure on the week days, then to read some part of it each Lord's day, till you have read it through.

3. That you would not lock it up in your closets, but suffer it to lie in your houses, where your children and servants may peruse it as they find opportunity. Who knoweth how successful and fruitful, this plain Treatise may prove, if the Lord shall be pleased to accompany it with his blessing?

That the Lord therefore would so bless these my poor and weak endeavors, that such as are yet in their natural state may be converted; that converts may be improved and built up in that grace wherein they stand, is the unfeigned desire, and hearty prayer of,

Your servant in the work of the Gospel, who hath been, and still is desirous of your spiritual welfare,

March 19th, 1668. THO. GOUGE.

TO MY DEARLY BELOVED FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS, THE INHABITANTS OF ST. SEPULCHRES PARISH.

Grace, Mercy, and Peace from GOD the Father of Mercies, and the God of all Consolation.

My Dear Friends,

CONSIDERING with myself, how besides my *Lord's day preaching*, I might be farther serviceable to your souls, in promoting your spiritual warfare: It pleased God to put it into my heart, to draw up some practical Directions for your better guidance in the way to heaven. Accordingly I set upon the work with all readiness and alacrity, being much persuaded in myself, that some spiritual advantage might (through God's blessing) accrue unto your souls thereby. The Lord, who is the searcher of all hearts, knoweth, that my only end and aim herein, is the advancement of your everlasting salvation: Which, if it shall be any way furthered by this small Treatise, I shall never repent of my pains and cost, but shall very much rejoice that the Lord, hath enabled me (in any measure) to be serviceable to him in the furtherance of the gospel of his dear Son, especially among you my dear flock. Several considerations have had some influence upon me in this undertaking; but the main motive is, the single sense of my *relation* to you, that it hath pleased God of his infinite goodness and free grace, to instruct me a weak, frail earthen vessel, with that inestimable treasure, *The mysteries of the Gospel*, and appointed me to preach unto you in particular, *The unsearchable riches of Christ.* I account it the greatest honor a poor creature can be capable of, to be made directly subservient to

N. B. *This Preface belongs to Christian Directions, &c.*

the glorious purposes of his Creator, for the recovery and restoration of the world by Jesus Christ: And therefore, that we ministers of the gospel, to whom God hath vouchsafed this honor, have the stronger engagement and obligation laid upon us to preach the gospel both in season, and out of season, and to lay out ourselves all manner of ways, if by any means we may gain souls unto Christ, and build them up in him. Now this way I have here taken, will have this advantage above others, above my ordinary preaching, and performance of other ministerial duties among you; that whereas by them I can mind you of the things which belong unto your everlasting peace, only while I am in this tabernacle: by this, as it is said of Abel, Heb. ix. 4. *I may still speak to you even when dead.* Accept therefore (my dear friends and neighbors) this little Treatise from the hands of your loving pastor: whose heart is exceedingly enlarged towards you, greatly longing after you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ. *For what is my hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? Are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?* 1 Thess. ii. 19. Accept it therefore, and testify your acceptance by reading of it, and much more by a conscionable performance of the directions contained in it. I think they will carry their own evidence with them, that they are all agreeable to the word of God: For, I have not made it my business to mint new notions, but to press upon you old truths, and known duties. I have drawn them up in a plain and familiar style and method, studying rather to be profitable, than accurate: they are of daily use to an holy life; and therefore, I hope you will daily peruse them. They are of general use to all sorts of Christians, at all times, in their several places, callings, conditions, and relations; and therefore, I hope, you will give the more diligent heed to them. Such whose callings and business will scarce afford them leisure on the week-days to look into such Treatises as this, I do earnestly entreat them, that at least on the Lord's days, after the performance of the public duties of piety in the congregations, and of private in their families, they would spend some time in reading a part of this book with their family. And the Lord make it abundantly useful and profitable unto you: Yea, "The "God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Je- "sus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the "everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work, "to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in "his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and "ever." *Amen.*

Your affectionate,
Though most unworthy Minister,
THO. GOUGE.

Sepulchres, London, 20th Dec. 1660.

PRINCETON
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A WORD TO SINNERS,

AND

A WORD TO SAINTS.

The FORMER tending to the awakening the consciences of secure sinners, unto a lively sense and apprehension of the dreadful condition they are in, so long as they live in their natural and unregenerate estate.

The LATTER tending to the directing and persuading of the godly and regenerate unto several singular duties.

JOHN iii. 1, 2, 3.

1. *There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews.*
2. *The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.*
3. *Jesus answered, and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

CHAP. I.

The exposition and observations arising out of the first and second verses.

FROM the beginning of this third chapter to the 22d verse is set forth the conference between our blessed Saviour and Nicodemus. In which are three things observable.

1. A description of Nicodemus, verse 1.

2. The occasion of the conference, which was Nicodemus his coming unto Christ, expressed verse 2.

3. The conference itself, from verse 3. to 22.

I. Nicodemus is thus described, verse 1. *There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:* He is here set forth,

1. By his name, *Nicodemus*, which is distinctly set down, as for the truth of the history, so for the honour of the man. It is observable, that in the holy scriptures there is most care of setting down the names of good men, that have, in their lifetime, some way or other, set forth God's glory, and made themselves examples worthy of imitation, "For God will honour such as honour "him," he will have their memorial blessed. As therefore we desire to have our memorial blessed, let us now labour to honour God in our several places, callings, conditions, and relations, by a conscionable discharge of the duties belonging to them: and then we may rest assured, God will, some way or other, honour us.

2. By his *Sect*, He is expressly said to be "a man of the Pharisees," who were a select sect among the Jews, of highest account for their seeming sanctity and strict profession. Whereas in truth they were very hypocrites, for "they did all to be seen of men," Mat. vi. 1. Which because Christ discovered, and made known to the people, they proved his greatest enemies and persecutors.

3. By his *Office*, It is in general said, that he was "a ruler of the Jews." Which is not to be taken, as if he were the only, or chief governor of the Jews, but to shew that he was none of the common sort; but one of those who had authority and government amongst the Jews.

It is observable, that few of the Pharisees and rulers received Christ's doctrine, and believed on him, as appears by their own expression, John vii. 48. "Have any of the rulers, or of the Pharisees, believed on him?" which interrogation importeth a strong negation; implying that none or few of the rulers or Pharisees believed on Christ. They were so puffed up with the pride of their high places; so swoln with conceitedness of their strict profession and seeming sanctity: and so possest with prejudice against the spiritual and heavenly doctrine of Christ, that their hearts boiled with much envy and indignation against him; and thereupon sought many ways to entrap, and ensnare him: Yea, out of very malice they thirsted after his blood, and never ceased till they took away his life. Yet here we find one, who was both a Pharisee and a ruler, become a disciple of Jesus Christ, whom Christ instructeth as in the doctrine of regeneration, so in other main principles of religion, and thereupon became a true believer; whence we may observe;

Observ. 'That the dew of God's grace often falleth on the 'most graceless. That the greatest of sinners are oftentimes 'received to mercy, and embraced in the arms of free grace.'

This God doth, as for the magnifying the riches of his grace, so for the encouraging great and notorious sinners to return from their sins, and to look up unto him for mercy. For are the greatest sinners oftentimes received to mercy? then there is hope of mercy for thee, how many and heinous soever thy sins are. St. Paul speaking of God's mercy to him, who was not only an heinous sinner, but the *chief of sinners*, declareth how God shewed mercy to him, that he might be a ground of hope, and encouragement unto other great and heinous sinners: "For this cause (saith "he) 1 Tim. i. 16. I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ "might shew forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which "should hereafter believe on him to life everlasting." Intimating that one special end Christ aimed at, in shewing mercy to such a sinner as himself, was to stir up, and encourage other great and heinous sinners to go unto Christ, and that with hope of acceptance, casting themselves and the burden of their sins upon him.

Yes, questionless the conversion of so many notorious sinners is recorded in scripture, not only as a memorial of what God hath done for others, but also as a sign and token what he is now ready and willing to do for the greatest sinners, upon their returning from their sins unto him by unfeigned repentance, and closing with Jesus Christ, by a true and lively faith. Oh therefore let those admirable and stupendous patterns of mercy held forth in scripture, be encouragements unto thee, to abandon thy sins, to turn over a new leaf, and to close with Jesus Christ, upon the terms of the gospel.

II. 'The occasion of the conference betwixt Christ and Nicodemus, followeth in verse 2. and that was his coming unto 'Christ;' which is amplified further by the time when he came, *and that was by night: The same came to Jesus by night.* Nicodemus his going unto Christ for farther instruction in the way and means of salvation, did evidence the *truth* of his faith; but his going by night, did evidence the weakness of his faith. He believed upon the hearing Christ preach, and seeing the miracles, which he wrought, that he was *a teacher sent from God.* Yet because he was a Pharisee and a ruler, thought it a disgrace to go openly unto Christ, to be instructed by him; but went by night, and thereby discovered the *weakness* of his faith; whence we may observe.

Observ. 'True faith may be exceeding weak.' This title, "O ye of little faith," wherewith Christ often upbraideth his disciples, is an evident proof thereof: So likewise that expression of the poor man, who cried unto Christ, "Lord, I believe, help thou "my unbelief." The former word, *I believe*, sheweth the truth of his faith; but the latter word, *unbelief*, sheweth the *weakness* of his faith, which was so weak, that he calls it *unbelief.*

Art thou conscious to thyself of the weakness of thy faith?

1. 'Be thankful unto God for that measure and degree which 'thou hast, though it be but as a grain of mustard seed for quan-'tity;' for the least dram of true faith is of greater value than mountains of gold and silver.

2. 'Content not thyself with a small measure of faith,' for contentedness with a weak faith, is an argument of no faith: and besides, the greater and stronger thy faith is, the greater and stronger will be thy comfort and consolation. For the stronger thy faith is, the clearer will thy apprehension be of thine interest in Christ, and of the pardon of thy sins, in and through the merits of his death and passion; the more virtue and strength wilt thou draw from Christ for the mortifying thy lusts, and for the quickening thy graces; yea, with the greater cheerfulness wilt thou go on in thy Christian course.

3. 'Labour and strive after a greater measure and degree of 'faith,' to grow from faith to faith, from one degree of faith un-

to another, till thou attain unto the highest degree thereof, even to a full assurance. To this end be earnest with God in prayer for the increase of thy faith. For every grace depends upon him, not only for birth, but also for growth and increase: but of this grace of faith, he is in a special manner styled, as the *author*, so the *finisher* thereof, Heb. xii. 2.

Though thy faith at present be weak, yet know for thy comfort, That the weakest faith, if true and sincere, is sufficient to salvation. For though God giveth not to all believers a like measure and degree of faith, but to some more, to others less; yet he giveth to none of his less than may suffice to their salvation; so that the least faith hath this in it, That it is sufficient to salvation, in that it doth interest us in Christ, and in all the promises of the gospel.

III. The conference itself follows, which is a dialogue between Nicodemus, and our blessed Saviour, wherein Nicodemus begins, saying, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come "from God; for no man can do these miracles that thou dost, "except God be with him." Wherein we may observe,

1. 'The title he giveth to our Saviour, *Rabbi*,' which signifieth *Master*, and so our evangelist expoundeth it, John i. 38. This title rightly taken in its proper sense, is due only to Christ, who is "the great prophet and teacher that came from God," as Nicodemus here acknowledgeth. Whence we may observe.

Observ. 'That Jesus Christ is the great prophet, and teacher 'of his church:' being alone able to declare his Father's will, and to open the mysteries of the gospel. And indeed all other prophets were but *types* of this great *prophet*. 'He lay in the 'bosom of his Father,' and so understood the mind and will of God; and was thereby enabled to make known the oracles of God, and the mysteries of salvation.

To him let us give ear and hearken, preaching unto us both in his gospel, and by his ministers, who make known unto us the mysteries of the gospel.

II. The next thing that followeth in the conference, is, 'The 'profession which Nicodemus maketh of Christ, we know (saith 'he) that thou art a teacher come from God; for no man can do 'these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.' In which we may observe,

1. The profession itself, 'we know that thou art a teacher 'come from God.'

2. The reason thereof in the next words, 'For no man can do 'these miracles that thou dost, except God be with him.' As if he had said, whosoever worketh miracles, cometh from God, but thou workest miracles, therefore thou comest from God. This clause, 'these miracles thou dost,' carrieth a great *emphasis*, and sheweth that they were very great miracles which Christ did, and

so confirm the argument the more. This reason is sound, and affordeth this point of doctrine.

Observ. 'Miracles cannot be wrought but by divine power.' For miracles alter the order and course of nature; which none can do, but he which hath appointed, and set that order, namely God. I will not insist on this, that I may hasten to that which I mainly intend in this treatise.

CHAP. II.

The exposition and observations arising out of verse 3.

IN Verse 3. follows Christ's answer to Nicodemus, which is continued to verse 22. In which Christ first declareth the necessity of *regeneration*, in these words, 'Verily, verily I say unto thee, except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God.'

Before we come to the substance of Christ's discourse, observe we his manner of entertaining Nicodemus.

You have heard from the foregoing verses, that Nicodemus was both a Pharisee and a ruler; both which sorts of men most of all opposed Christ. And you have heard of his weakness, how through fear and shame "he went to Christ by night," being loath to be seen with him. Yet Christ rejects him not, but kindly entertains him, and instructs him in such points whereof he was ignorant, though they were fundamental points necessary to salvation. Whence we may observe,

Observ. 'Christ is ready to entertain those that in truth and 'uprightness seek unto him, though their weaknesses and infirmities 'are many.' He rejecteth not such as are weak in faith, for their weakness. We read in the history of the gospel, that when Christ lived upon the earth, he rejected none who came to him in uprightness of heart. Some indeed went away of themselves, but he turned away none. Only he seemed not to regard the woman of Canaan, But why? Surely not out of any purpose or intent to reject her, or turn her away, but only to make known the greatness and strength of her faith. For in the close Christ saith unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith," Mat. xv. 28. And can any imagine, that now Christ is in heaven, he hath not the same bowels of compassion towards those that come unto him, which he had, when he was upon the earth? Questionless though he be free from passion, yet not from compassion towards weak believers. That which was long before prophesied of him by Isaiah, chap. xlii. 3. ever was, and will be found true in him, namely, "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoaking flax shall he not quench:" that is, He shall not deal roughly and rigorously

with weak Christians, such as are weak in grace, but mildly and gently.

For the end of Christ's coming was "to seek and to save that "which was lost," Luke xix. 10. And can we imagine that Christ, who seeketh after those who go away from him, will reject any who do in truth seek after him?

What encouragement should this be unto all poor believers, how weak soever their faith is, to go unto Christ, as for the strengthening their weak faith, for so the subduing their strong lusts, and for the reviving their drooping souls! For your further encouragement, you have Christ's gracious invitation, Mat. xi. 28. "Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Hath he bid thee come, and will he reject thee when thou comest? Hath he called, come ye holy ones, come ye righteous ones, come ye strong ones, and you only shall have rest? Hath he not invited the weak, and the weary also, the drooping and fainting soul! Go poor weak soul, go unto Christ, behold! he calleth thee, go unto him, and thou mayest expect thy cure. Questionless, one special reason why Christ shewed himself so willing and ready to hearken to the cry of those who came unto him for the cure of their bodily distempers, when he was upon the earth, and to heal the same, was to stir us up to go unto him for the healing of all our spiritual maladies and diseases. For Christ came not into the world to heal bodies, but souls. And therefore when the name Jesus was given him, the reason is said to be this, *Because he shall save his people from their sins*, Mat. i. 21. Not their bodies from sicknesses, but their souls from sins.

Art thou bound under any spiritual infirmities? Do as those sick and diseased persons did, when Christ was upon the earth, who are said to go unto him in faith, believing he was both able and willing to cure them; whereby they drew virtue from him for their healing.

Art thou troubled for the weakness of thy faith, complaining thou hast no assurance of thine *interest* in Christ, no assurance of the pardon of thy sins? Go unto Christ by prayer for increase of faith, believing that he is, as able, so willing to strengthen thy weak faith. And fear not, thou shalt find such measure of strength added to thee as Christ seeth best, and as shall be sufficient for thee.

Art thou sensible of the working and stirring of corruption in thee, fearing lest it should get dominion over thee? Lay hold on that promise, Rom. vi. 14. *Sin shall not have dominion over you.* And in confidence of his faithfulness that spake it, apply thyself to Christ by prayer, for his making good that word to thee; and then stand still and see the salvation of God. Lust, as strong as it is, will not be able to stand before the prayer of faith: only be careful, that when thou hast made thy prayer, thou set a watch.

Art thou assaulted with the temptations of Satan, and fearest that he may get the victory over thee? Go unto Christ by prayer for strength and support against them; believing there is, as a power in Christ, so a willingness in him to succour, and strengthen thee; and thou shalt be sure to find, if not deliverance from temptations, yet grace sufficient to resist them, and power to overcome them.

Lastly, Art thou troubled with an hard and obdurate heart? with a filthy and unclean heart? with a worldly and covetous heart? with a proud and barren heart? Go unto Christ by prayer, believing there is, as a power, so a willingness in him to molify thine hard and obdurate heart; to purify thy filthy and unclean heart; to spiritualize thy worldly and covetous heart; to humble thy proud heart; to make fruitful thy barren heart. And doubt not but thou shalt find thine hard and obdurate heart in some measure softened, thy filthy and unclean heart in some measure purified, thy worldly and covetous heart in some measure spiritualized, thy proud heart in some measure humbled, and thy barren heart in some measure made fruitful.

And certainly one special reason why many go drooping and groaning so long under the bondage of corruption, under the weight and burden of their spiritual maladies and diseases, is, because they do not go unto Christ by prayer for freedom from the same, or through the weakness of their faith, they do not believe Christ is, as able, so willing to help and deliver them. For what Christ said to the poor man who came unto him in behalf of his possessed child, the same he saith unto thee, *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth*, Mark ix. 23.

Obj. Some are apt to say, I have often gone unto Christ by prayer, earnestly begging of him to strengthen my weak graces, to subdue my strong lusts and corruptions, to mollify my hard heart, &c. but I cannot pray in faith, I cannot believe that he is, as able, so willing to grant my requests.

Ans. 1. 'Thou mayest pray in faith, even then when thou 'thinkest thou dost not believe.' Weak Christians are often mistaken here, supposing that if they be not confidently persuaded that God will hear them, they do not pray in faith: whereas it is not a confidence that God will hear us, but a dependence upon Christ in hope of audience, that is our sweet evidence of faith in prayer. Thou sayest thou prayest, and prayest, but canst not be persuaded that the holy God will hear the prayers of such a vile and unworthy wretch, and thereupon concludest that thou dost not pray in faith. But let me ask thee, 'Dost thou offer up thy prayers in the name 'of Christ? Dost thou depend upon him in hope of an answer 'for his sake? This is praying in faith.'

2. 'Mourn and weep for the weakness of thy faith.'

3. 'Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would strengthen it.'

4. 'Know that thy corruption neither is, nor will be utterly 'destroyed, so long as thou livest here in this world;' neither will thy spiritual maladies and diseases be quite cured; but they do, and will continue in some measure and degree, partly to bring down thy *pride*, which of all sins is the most odious and abominable unto God, and to advance thy *humility*, which of all graces is most pleasing and acceptable unto God: and partly that thou mayest have frequent occasion of going unto God by prayer, for help and strength against the power of thy lusts and corruptions.

5. 'Know that power against sin, increase of grace, an humble, tender, clean heart, are mercies, as worth the praying for, 'so worthy the waiting for.' Christ's delays are no denials: thou canst not say, he will not, because yet he hath not given thee thy desires. Be not wearying of seeking, in due season thou shalt reap, if thou faint not.

Before I leave this point, I shall add one word by way of caution. Beware thou mistake not thyself.

Take not thyself to be one of little *faith*, whilst thou hast no *faith*. Let not unbelievers catch at the comforts and encouragements that belong to the least of saints; that which is their meat, will be thy poison. Comforts, falsely applied, though they be sweet in the mouth, will prove curses in the belly. Hast thou no faith? O tremble, this is the word that belongs to thee: "He that believeth not shall be damned," Mark xvi. 16. Though to him that hath shall be given, yet to him that hath not, shall be taken away, even that which he seemeth to have.

He that hath the least faith, is a resolved enemy of all sin, a resolved friend of holiness, is resolved to hang upon Christ, to cleave unto Christ, to follow him to the death in righteousness and holiness of life, though he still do question whether Christ be his or no.

Is it not thus with thee? Beware how thou catch at the forementioned comforts. Yet this let me say to thee also; If thou hast not faith, wilt thou go to Christ for faith? If thou canst not go to Christ as a *believer*, wilt thou go to him as a *sinner?* If thou art not yet in a state of salvation, art thou willing to be saved? Art thou willing to learn of Christ, to ask his counsel, *What must I do to be saved?* wilt thou go thus to Christ, 'Lord, camest not thou 'into the world to save sinners? to make intercession for trans-'gressors? to seek, and to save them which are lost? Oh wilt thou 'save this sinner? my sinful soul, Lord? I fear I am none of 'thine, but wilt thou make me thine? I come to thy door, I lie 'at thy feet, a poor lost soul, an undone creature? Oh wilt thou 'take me in, and make me one of thy disciples?' Wilt thou thus come to Christ? Even thou also art one of those that he calls to; "He came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance," Mat. ix. 13.

Thus much of Christ's entertaining Nicodemus.

Come we now to the first general point whereof Christ discourseth with Nicodemus, and that was the doctrine of regeneration, in these words, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man "be born again; he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." In which we may note,

1. 'The manner of propounding it.'

2. 'The matter and substance of it.'

For the manner, it is propounded with a double asseveration, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee." In the Greek it is, *Amen, amen*, which in the Hebrew signifieth *truth*. The asseveration is doubled to stir up attention in Nicodemus, who being yet in a great measure ignorant of the fundamental principles of religion, might haply have lightly esteemed this doctrine of regeneration, and therefore to stir up his attention, Christ useth this double asseveration, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee*. Which was a form of speech often used by our Saviour when he would solemnly avouch any weighty truth. He never used it but in matters of great moment. By it therefore our Saviour giveth us to understand, 'That the truth 'here delivered is a weighty truth, not lightly to be regarded, and 'slightly passed over.' For he who gave this commandment, *Let your communication be yea, yea, nay, nay*, would never have added this double asseveration, if there had not been need thereof. Christ therefore having prefixed this preface to the following truths, doth thereby stir us up to give, as the more credit, so the more diligent heed thereto. Yea, and thereby shews the doctrine of regeneration to be a most important point necessary to be known and learned of all.

The matter or substance of the doctrine of regeneration, as Christ hath laid it down, followeth in these words, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.*

For the more profitable handling whereof, I shall,

1. 'Clear the words by giving you the sense and meaning of 'them.'

2. 'Raise and prosecute such points of doctrine as they afford 'unto us.'

For the clearing of the words, *Except a man.* In the Greek it is, *ean me tis, Except any.* This indefinite particle joined with an exclusive, hath the force of a general. As if our Saviour had said, *No man can enter into heaven except he be born again;* so as he speaketh not only of notorious sinners, as adulterers, drunkards, swearers, &c. but of all who are in their natural condition, though they live never so unblameably, free from scandalous sins, if they be not born again, their civil righteousness will do them little good, *for they shall never see the kingdom of God.*

Be born.] *Except a man be born,* This is spoken metaphorically and spiritually, in allusion to our natural birth, which Nicodemus not observing, clean misconstructed Christ's words.

Now this word *born*, or *begotten*, is used to shew that the whole nature of man must be changed, and in a manner new framed, not in regard of the substance, but of the qualities of it. The natural essence and substance either of the soul or body is not destroyed, but still remaineth, only it is divested of the old, and invested with new qualities. He that is regenerated hath a renewed understanding, a renewed will, renewed affections; yea, new desires, and a new conversation. So that the meaning is, *No man can enter into heaven, unless by the Spirit of God he be first altered and changed from what he was*, even brought out of the state of nature into the state of grace, and so become a new creature, as in regard of his new manner of *creation*, so in regard of his new manner of *conversation*, leading another manner of life than he did before.

Born again.] The original word *anothen*, translated Again, is as well attributed to place, as to time, and signifieth above, as well as again, as verse 31. And indeed this is the most usual signification of the word, and therefore some translate it so here, *Except a man be born from above*, as it is in our old translation. And though our new translators of the Bible have altered it, yet have they put in the margin, *from above*.

But questionless in this place the word signifieth *again:* for so Nicodemus taketh it, verse 4. 'How can a man be born when he 'is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, 'and be born?' So that the word here hath respect to the time more than to the place, and implieth the necessity of a second birth, that a man be born of the *spirit*, as well as born of the *flesh*, otherwise it had been better for him, he had never been born at all.

He cannot see the kingdom of God.] Kingdom is here taken for that happy estate whereunto God bringeth his elect in Christ, the entrance thereunto is in this life, which is commonly called the *kingdom of grace*. The full possession is in the life to come, called the *kingdom of glory;* these are not two distinct kingdoms, but two degrees of one and the same kingdom. Now whereas Christ saith, *He cannot see the kingdom of God*, it is in effect as much as *He cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, as our Saviour clearly explaineth, verse 5. *Except a man be born of water, and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*, that is, he cannot be saved.

Having thus cleared the words by shewing you the sense and meaning of them; they afford unto us this point of doctrine.

Doct. 'Regeneration is necessary to salvation; or, to make a 'man a member of the invisible Church, and so an heir of God's 'kingdom, it is necessary that he be regenerate and born again, 'and thereby brought out of the state of nature, into the state of 'grace.'

This very doctrine, for substance, is again inculcated, verse 5.

Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born of water and the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. Now our Saviour twice repeating this doctrine, both in verse 3. and verse 5. and in both places prefixing a double asseveration, *Verily, verily,* doth notably confirm the truth of it, and therefore there needs no further proof thereof.

But for the better conceiving, and right applying this doctrine; I shall shew you,

1. The nature of regeneration, what it is.
2. The parts of regeneration.
3. The causes which concur to the work of regeneration.
4. The reasons proving the necessity of regeneration to salvation.
5. The uses of the point.

CHAP. III.

Of the nature of Regeneration, what it is.

'REGENERATION is that grace whereby a natural man is 'made a spiritual or new man.' Even he that by sin was a child of the devil, is made a child of God. For, as by virtue of our natural birth, that which was no man is made a man, or son of man; so by this spiritual birth, he that was a natural man is made a new man, even a spiritual man, a child of God. So that to speak properly, 'Regeneration is another birth after the former:' A spiritual birth after our natural birth, whereby a man is as it were another man. As it is said of Caleb, That he was a man of another spirit: So may it be said of a regenerate man, that he is of another spirit, being quite altered and changed from what he was before.

Now this regeneration, or new birth, cannot be meant of a birth after the flesh, for no natural or carnal thing is to be concepted in regeneration. But regeneration is a spiritual birth, a birth of the spirit, as is evident by those words, *That which is born of the spirit is spirit,* John iii. 6. So as by the work of regeneration flesh is turned into spirit, that is, The carnal corrupt disposition of man, is changed and altered into a renewed and sanctified disposition: whereby it appears that regeneration is as it were a new creation, and a regenerate man is called a new creature, being renewed throughout, both thorough his soul with all the powers and faculties thereof; and thorough his body, with all the parts and members thereof. So that the blind understanding is in some measure enlightened with the knowledge of God, and the knowledge of Jesus Christ: The stubborn and contu-

macious will is, in some measure, obedient and conformable to the will of God: The seared and benumbed conscience is now quickened and awakened; the hard heart softened; the unruly affections crucified; and the body with all the parts and members thereof, are made ready instruments to put in execution the good intentions of the mind. Thus by regeneration men are wrought upon throughout, being wonderfully altered and changed from what they were before: in relation to which alteration they are said to be born again. Which may inform us of the wonderful depravation of our nature, which was such, as mending and repairing would not serve the turn, but God must new make, and new create us, we must be born again, made new creatures.

Which consideration should methinks take away all ground of boasting from any man, and stir up every regenerate person to give unto God the praise and the glory of his happy change, saying, *Not unto us, not unto us, but unto thy name be the praise and glory of this great work.*

Quest. *Doth regeneration admit any degrees?*

Ans. Yes, *Verily.* For regeneration may be considered in the beginning, and progress of it: or in the consummation and perfection of it.

It is begun and increaseth in this life; it is consummate and perfect in the life to come.

In this life there is spirit mixed with flesh, that is, grace with some corruption of nature, as is evident by the apostle's complaint in these words, *When I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God after the inward man: But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members*, Rom. vii. 21, 22, 23. So that sin and corruption doth remain in all the regenerate, as long as their soul remain in their mortal bodies; it remains though it doth not reign in them. It is in this life cast down, but not cast out. *Habitat sed non regnat, manet sed non dominatur, dejectum sed non ejectum tamen*, &c. *Bernard.* in Serm. 10. on Psalm 90.

And this, God, in great wisdom, is pleased to permit, to keep us humble and low in ourselves, and to drive us unto Jesus Christ, and that as long as this flux of blood runneth, we should always be desirous to touch at least the hem of his garment.

But at death that corruption will be utterly consumed, and body and soul clean freed from it; insomuch as at the resurrection when body and soul shall be again united, the regeneration begun in this world, will be manifested to be most perfect. Whereas, in this life, the most regenerate are imperfect, through the relics of sin, and remainder of corruption, which will abide in them so long as they abide and continue in this world.

Now seeing the work of regeneration is imperfect in the very

best here in this life, and that there remains flesh and corruption in them, so long as they remain in this world; do not thou look too high, I mean, after a great measure and degree of grace than here is to be had. Many there are, who being regenerate by the Spirit of God, and so brought out of the state of nature into the state of grace, presently look for a freedom from all sin and corruption, which because they find working and stirring in them, thereupon question the work of regeneration and truth of grace in their souls; but let such know, that they look for more than here is to be found, or than God expects from them.

For God doth not expect or require of us here, freedom from sin and corruption, but that we should endeavour to subdue and mortify it more and more, according to the measure of grace and strength which we have received from him. He doth not require of us that we be without sin, but that sin doth not rule nor reign in our mortal bodies, according to that of the Apostle, Rom. vi. 12. *Let not sin reign in your mortal bodies.* Neither doth the Lord require of us exact and perfect righteousness, which is impossible to our corrupt nature: but only that we strive and labour after that we sincerely endeavour to serve him after the directions of his word: and that for our fallings and imperfections, we do in an humble confession bewail the same: and then beg the pardon and forgiveness of them, in and through the merits of Jesus Christ, and this God will accept of; for he esteemeth more of our affections than of our actions, and accepteth the will for the deed, according to that of the Apostle, 2 Cor. viii. 12. *If there be a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.*

CHAP. IV.

Of the Parts of Regeneration, and Causes concurring thereunto.

HAVING shewed you what regeneration is, and how it doth admit degrees: I shall shew you the parts of regeneration, which are two, 1. *Mortification.* 2. *Vivification.*

Mortification is implied under the phrases of *casting off, and crucifying the old man, and destroying the body of sin.* This is a duty expressly enjoined in these words, *Mortify your members which are upon the earth,* Col. iii. 5. *By members on the earth,* he meaneth all sorts of lusts and sins whereunto a natural man is given, as is evident by the particular instances which he himself reckoneth up in the words following, as *fornication, uncleanness,* &c.

These must be mortified, that is, put to death. It is not enough to curb, and hold in sin, but the life of it must be let out. And

indeed it is impossible to put on the *new man*, till the *old man* be cast off. Therefore there is a necessity of mortification first, before vivification. For the bringing in of one form presupposeth the putting out or destroying of the other. Wherefore after mortification followeth vivification.

2. *Vivification* is the begetting of the life of grace in us, whence we live in holiness and righteousness. It is set forth in scripture by God's quickening us, and by *our walking in newness of life*, Eph. ii. 5.

Vivification then implieth a new spiritual life, which God by his Spirit worketh in us, which is clean contrary to our former, natural, corrupt course of life: for the effects of this life are holiness and righteousness, and all manner of good works.

Now it is absolutely necessary, that this part of regeneration namely vivification, be added to mortification, which is the other part, even as necessary, as that Christ being dead should be raised. Where had been the benefit of Christ's death, if he had not risen from the dead? And what can be imagined to be the profit of mortification without vivification? It is therefore the accustomed course of sacred scripture to infer the following of holiness, upon the flying of sin; the doing of good, upon the eschewing of evil. *Now the things which God hath joined, let no man put asunder.*

Let us therefore prove our regeneration not only by ceasing from sin, but following holiness, and working righteousness. Content not thyself to say, *I am not what I was*, unless thou canst also add, *I am what I was not.* It will be but little boot for thee to say, *I am no drunkard, nor swearer, nor covetous, nor a walker after the flesh:* unless thou canst also say, *By the grace of God I now walk after the Spirit, in faith and love, and holy obedience, watchful unto, and endeavouring after a fruitfulness in every good work.* Thou art not unjust, thou sayest, but dost thou shew mercy? Thou art no longer earthly, but art thou heavenly-minded? Thou art no longer contentious, or quarrelsome; but art thou a peace-maker? Thou hast no longer fellowship with the ungodly; but art thou a familiar of the saints? Thou wilt not now curse, or swear, or lie, or scoff; but dost thou pray and bless? Dost thou hear and read, and meditate on God? Dost thou study thine heart, and govern thy thoughts and affections? Dost thou bridle thy tongue, set a watch over thine eyes, and ears, and steps? Is it thy care to please, and in all things to walk worthy of the Lord? Look to thyself, that thou be not deceived. Cast off the works of darkness, and put on the armour of light: Cast off the old man, and put on the new man, which as it is created after the image, so it will carry thee on according to the will of God in righteousness and true holiness.

Having shewed the nature of regeneration, and the parts there-

of: I come now to shew what causes concur to the work of regeneration.

1. The efficient cause, or primary author, is God. For in this respect we are said *to be born of God, God hath begotten us; Even God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ*, Jam. i. 18.

2. The procuring causes are God's will, and God's mercy. There could be nothing out of God to move him. It must needs therefore arise from his own mere will. So saith the apostle James, *of his own will begat he us*, James i. 18. And there could be nothing in man to move God hereunto; for man by nature is most miserable. It must needs therefore arise from God's mere mercy: for misery is the proper object of mercy. On this ground it is justly said that God, 1 Pet. i. 3. *According to his abundant mercy hath he begotten us again.*

3. The immediate worker of regeneration is God's Spirit: in this respect we are said to be born of the Spirit, John iii. 4. and regeneration is styled the renewing of the Holy Ghost, Tit. iii. 5. For it is a divine work above human ability.

4. The ordinary instrumental cause is God's word. *Of his own will begat he us by the word of truth*, James i. 18. whereby is meant the gospel. In this respect the word is styled *incorruptible seed*, 1 Pet. i. 23. The gospel is that part of God's word which is most effectual hereunto, and it is thereupon styled the *gospel of salvation*, Eph. i. 13. And the *power of God unto salvation*, Rom. i. 16.

5. Ministers and preachers of the gospel, are ministerial causes of regeneration, who are in relation to their ministry said to *beget us*, and styled *fathers*, 1 Cor. iii. 15.

All these are comprised under the efficient cause, and are so far from thwarting one another, as they sweetly concur to produce this divine work of regeneration, being subordinate one to another, and may in this order be placed together. It being the will of God to shew mercy to man, he ordained ministers to cast the seed of his word into men's souls, which being quickened by the Spirit, men are thereby born again.

II. The material cause of regeneration, is the parts whereof it doth consist, which are two.

1. Mortification. 2. Vivification; of both which I have spoken in the foregoing chapter.

III. The formal cause of regeneration, is God's image planted in us, which consists in holiness and righteousness. After this image we are said to be renewed, Eph. iv. 24. This makes an essential difference betwixt a natural and a regenerate man.

IV. The final causes next and subordinate to the glory of God's free grace and rich mercy, are especially two.

1. 'To make men able to do good;' namely such good as may be acceptable and honourable to God, profitable to other men.

and truly advantageous to themselves. The Apostle therefore speaking of regeneration (which we have shewed to be a kind of creation) thus expresseth this end, *We are created in Christ Jesus unto good works*, Eph. ii. 10.

2. 'To make men fit for glory.' For corrupt flesh cannot partake of celestial glory. Whereupon, saith Christ, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God;* so far shall he be from being admitted into it, as he shall not come so near as to see it. God will not take a sinner reeking in his lusts, and presently invest him with a crown of glory. And therefore that we may be fitted for heaven, the Lord is pleased by his Spirit to regenerate us, making us new creatures, and thereby making us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light.

Behold the riches of God's mercy and goodness, that he not only created us at first in a most happy estate, after his own image and likeness; but when we wittingly and wilfully fell from the same, and plunged ourselves in misery, wherein he might justly have left us, as he did the evil angels. Yet he hath not only restored us again to that former estate, by renewing his image in us; but thereby fitted us for a more glorious and excellent estate: wherein his goodness appeareth to be, as his greatness, infinite, incomprehensible. Who can sufficiently set it forth? *For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy towards them that fear him*, Psalm ciii. 11.

CHAP. V.

Sheweth the Reasons why Regeneration is necessary to Salvation.

HAVING spoken of the point by way of explication; I come now to speak of it by way of confirmation. To this end I shall shew you the reasons of the point, why regeneration is necessary to salvation.

Reas. 1. From the immutability of God's purpose. God who hath chosen us to life, hath chosen us also to holiness, as our way to it. *We are bound to give thanks to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through the sanctification of the Spirit*, 2 Thess. ii. 13. Whoever will pass into glory, must take grace in his way. You ask, Why may I not be saved, unless I be regenerated? Why? because God is resolved on the contrary, *This is the will of God, your sanctification first, and then your salvation*, 1 Thess. iv. 3. Now the purposes of God shall stand, *With him is no variableness, nor shadow of turning.* All the world shall sooner be damned, than the purpose of

God shall be made void. The Lord God must cease to be the unchangeable God, if thou ever be saved, who wilt not be sanctified.

Reas. 2. From the stability of God's word. God hath said, *Except a man be born again, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Is the word of God, yea and nay? Doth he say and unsay? *Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his word shall not pass away*, Mat. xxiv. 35. Count upon it sinner, as sure as God is true, thou shalt never see the salvation of God, unless thou be first made partaker of the renewing of the Holy Ghost.

Reas. 3. From the respect that regeneration hath to salvation. Regeneration is a degree and part of salvation. Grace is glory begun, holiness is the beginning of blessedness, the perfection whereof will be in heaven hereafter, where the *image of God, which consisteth in knowledge, holiness, and righteousness*, will be perfected in our souls, where we shall perfectly love God, and delight in him, and be ever praising him with the heavenly host. Now, how canst thou expect the participation and enjoyment of this blessed estate, without regeneration and renovation here? Unless the image of God be renewed upon thee in holiness? And thou dost truly love God, and delight in communion with him here? Canst thou expect the consummation without a beginning? to be perfectly holy hereafter, and not initially holy here? to live with God in glory hereafter, and yet here live and lie in thy filthiness and uncleanness? Canst thou expect hereafter to live in the everlasting love of God, and yet here have no true love to him at all? Canst thou expect hereafter fulness of delight in the presence of God, and yet here have no delight in him at all? But takest thy whole delight either in satisfying thy covetous humour by heaping up riches, or in gratifying thy sinful lusts and affections, by yielding to the solicitations of the flesh.

Be not deceived, as I said before, so I must say it again, grace is a necessary beginning of glory; as sin is death begun, and hell begun, so is grace the first fruits of life and glory. And, as certain as it is, that he shall never find an hell hereafter, who is purged from his sins here; so undoubtedly certain is it, that he shall never come into the divine presence hereafter, who is not here made partaker of the divine nature; he shall never enter into the *kingdom of glory*, who is not first born into the *kingdom of grace*. Be a convert in this world, or thou wilt be a reprobate in the other world. Thou mayest as well expect a birth, where there hath been nothing formed in the womb, a noon-tide, where there hath been no dawning, as ever look to see the day-light of glory, who hast never known the morning of grace.

Reas. 4. From that corruption of man's nature in which he is brought into the world. For our first parents having by their fall, defaced that image of God, in which they were at first created, and being thereupon corrupted and polluted in every power

of their soul, and part of their body: all that come from them are in like manner corrupted and polluted, an unclean offspring from unclean progenitors. *For who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? not one*, as Job speaketh, Job xiv. 4. And saith our Saviour, *That which is born of the flesh is flesh*, John iii. 6. that is, Every one that is born of man, every mother's child is carnal and corrupt: every man by his first birth is polluted and unclean: *Now no unclean person can enter into God's kingdom*, Rev. xxi. 27. Believe it, sinner, God will never take thee from the dunghill reeking in thy lusts, and set thee down by him in the throne. The holy land was never designed to be peopled with dogs and swine. *Without shall be dogs*, Rev. xxii. *Corruption shall not inherit incorruption*, nor shall flesh and blood inherit the kingdom of God. Bastards may not inherit. Thou must first be a child, and have the spirit of a child in thee, and then thou art heir, an heir of God, and a joint-heir with Christ.

Reas. 5. From the holiness of God's nature, which is such, that no unclean person can stand in his presence. There is a contrariety between the holy nature of God, and the unholy nature of carnal and unregenerate men. And therefore what communion can there be between them? Between an holy God, and unholy creatures? Between a pure God, and impure creatures? Surely none at all. So much the Apostle expresseth, 2 Cor. vi. 14. where he saith, *What fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness?* Or the righteous God with unrighteous men? What communion hath light with darkness? which interrogation implieth a strong negation. Believe it, sinner, if ever you look to enjoy communion with God in glory, you must have union with him in grace; you must here be regenerate, and become new creatures; yea, holy as he is holy, that you may be such, as he may dwell withall, and delight in. For, as the Apostle speaketh, Heb. xii. 14. *Without holiness no man shall see the Lord.* He shall be so far from enjoying the presence of God, that he shall not so much as see him.

CHAP. VI.

An Use of Exhortation to endeavour after Regeneration with quickening motives thereunto.

HAVING thus done with the explication and confirmation of the point; come we now to the use and application thereof.

I. The first may be an use of exhortation, both to unregenerate, and to the regenerate.

First, to the unregenerate: Is regeneration absolutely necessa-

ry to salvation? Oh then, how doth it concern you, who are yet in your sins, and under the power of corrupt nature, earnestly to desire, and industriously to labour after this saving change, in the use of all means, God hath sanctified thereunto! Let your outward condition be what it will, never so rich, never so honourable, yet, far be it from you, to sit down satisfied in any condition, till you be renewed, and sanctified by the Spirit of God. Alas! how many be there in the world, who, though in their natural and carnal estate, yet, live as securely and merrily, as if their condition were as safe and good, as the best! Ask them one by one, Whether the work of regeneration be wrought in their souls? And, some will answer, they hope it is; others, that they never doubted it; though, none of them know what regeneration is, nor ever minded any such thing. And yet these men have not only read, but do likewise believe the words of our Saviour, who hath told them, *That except they be born again, they cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven*, John iii. 3.

Ah sinner, I beseech thee, for the sake of thy precious and immortal soul, to stir up in thyself an hearty desire and sincere endeavour after this blessed work. As it is the one thing necessary to salvation, so let it be the main thing of thy desire and endeavour. There is nothing deserves precedency in thy thoughts, aims, and labours before this. David resolved not to *give sleep to his eyes, nor slumber to his eye-lids, till he found an habitation for the Lord*, Psalm cxxxii. 4. The habitation which pleaseth God most, is thine heart, but it must be a renewed heart, Oh how darest thou sleep a night in that house, where God doth not dwell! and he dwells not in thee, unless thou be regenerated by his holy Spirit. In the fear of God therefore, see thou give no rest to thy soul, no ease to thy mind, till thou find a blessed change wrought in thee, till thou findest thou art brought out of the state of nature, into the state of grace. Neither sit down satisfied in the enjoyment of any worldly comfort, without the enjoyment of this mercy. And indeed, how canst thou live merrily, or sleep quietly, so long as thou livest in thine unregenerate estate? in which, if thou shouldest die, thou wouldest perish forever, even to all eternity: especially, considering the uncertainty of thy life, whether thou shalt live a day, or an hour longer.

For the more profitable handling this use, I shall,

1. Give you some motives, to quicken up your desires and endeavours after the work of regeneration.

2. Shew you the means to be performed, for the better attaining thereunto.

The motives may be drawn to these three heads.

1. The excellency.
2. The utility.
3. The necessity of regeneration.

I. For the first, the excellency thereof will appear from these four particulars;

1. 'Regeneration doth ennoble a man, raise him up towards his original perfection.' Man was made the noblest of all creatures in this visible world, in the image and likeness of God. Sin defaced the image of God, and stamped the image of the devil upon him. A sinner, is a man degenerated into a beast; *Man being in honour abideth not, but is like the beasts that perish*, Psalm xlix. 12. He lives like a beast, and dies like a beast, not knowing whither he goeth. *Every man is brutish in his knowledge*, Jer. x. 14. He hath a brutish heart, lives a brutish life. By grace, a man comes to himself, is raised up from a beast to a man again, renewed after the image of God; the Spirit of glory, and of God shines forth in him. There is more of the glory of God seen in a saint, than in all the works of God under the sun; nay, than in the glorious Sun in the heavens. The sun, moon, and stars, fall short of the glory of the new creature. *In illus tantum sunt opera Dei, in hac est Imago Dei.* Aug.

2. 'The excellency of regeneration appears, in that it makes a man a true Christian.' A man is not really a Christian, because he hath been baptized, beareth the name, and frequenteth the ordinances of Christ; but, because he is regenerated by the Spirit of Christ, and thereby translated out of a state of sin and death, into a state of life and peace. For, as under the law, he was not a *Jew*, who was one outwardly, being circumcised in the flesh: but he was a *Jew*, who was one inwardly, being circumcised in his heart and spirit; in like manner, he is no true Christian, who is only outwardly baptized; but, he who is inwardly baptized by the Spirit, and whose heart is changed and renewed.

3. 'The excellency of this new birth appears in this, that it is the beginning of eternal life and happiness? Even of the same life which we shall live hereafter in heaven with the saints, and glorious angels, to all eternity. Grace here is not only an evidence of glory hereafter, but it is the beginning of that glory, which hereafter we shall more fully enjoy in heaven. Grace and glory differ only in degree: for grace is glory begun here, and glory is grace consummated, and perfected hereafter. Now, considering that this is such an excellent state, how doth it concern you, as earnestly to desire, so industriously to endeavour after it, in the use of all means God hath sanctified?

II. 'Another motive may be taken from the utility of regeneration.' If it be demanded, What is the profit thereof? we may answer as the Apostle did of circumcision, Much every way. For this is that godliness, which is profitable unto all things, having promises of the life that now is, and of that which is to come; that is, it hath heaven and earth entailed on it, and therefore must needs be profitable. The regenerate therefore are called *heirs of*

the promises, Heb. vi. 17. Such only have the true riches, being rich in faith, as the apostle James calleth them, James ii. 5. As Laodicea was poor, though abounding in outward fulness: So, these are truly rich, though destitute of many outward things, having an interest in God, who is the fountain of all blessings. How should the consideration hereof stir you up, as earnestly to thirst, so sincerely to endeavour after this blessed *state!*

III. 'Another motive may be taken from the necessity of regeneration. It is absolutely necessary to salvation.' It had been better for thee never to have been born, than not to be born again. It is as necessary, as heaven and happiness. For, saith our Saviour himself, *Except a man be born again, he cannot see*, much less *enter into the kingdom of heaven*. So that there is no hope of the salvation of any unregenerate man, or woman: but, if they live and die in that estate, their portion will be death and damnation with the devils and damned to all eternity. And, in regard of the uncertainty of their lives, they are not sure to be out of hell one day longer.

Ah sinner! What dost thou mean then to continue in thy carnal and unregenerate estate? As sure as the word of God is true, if thou die therein, thou art shut out of all hope of mercy for ever; and shalt pass into easeless and endless misery. In the fear of God, therefore, when thou riseth up in the morning, consider with thyself, that thou art uncertain of being out of hell till the evening: and when thou liest down, consider how uncertain thou art of being out of hell till the next morning. Surely this consideration is enough to amaze any poor Christian, who is indeed regenerate, but making some question thereof in himself. How much more should it amaze and startle thee, who art yet in thy carnal and sinful estate? and stir thee up without any farther delay to escape for thy life, and make out in haste after thy redemption from this dreadful condition.

I would ask thee this question; Whether, if thou shouldest put off thy seeking after the great work of regeneration and conversion till another year, week, or day, thou art sure to be then on this side the grave, or on this side hell? Certain it is, thou hast no assurance of thy life for one day longer. Nay, I dare boldly say, that thou thyself knowest and believest as much. Ah sinner, 'What folly, yea, what madness is it then, for thee wilfully to live one day longer in such an estate? in which, if thou shouldest die, thou art without hope of recovery, undone for ever!'

Obj. Haply, thou wilt say, though I am not sure to live another day, yet, I am likely, being in good health and strength of body.

Ans. How many as strong and healthful as thyself, have suddenly by death been snatched away? And why mayest not thou as soon be taken away, having no lease of thy life; who then but-

a fool, or a mad-man, would adventure his carnal happiness upon such an hazard? Oh therefore, as thou tenderest the everlasting good of thy precious soul, put not off this great and weighty work a day longer: *for who knoweth what a day may bring forth*, Prov. xxvii. 1.

Hadst thou been taken away in the state thou art in, how sad had thy case been? where hadst thou been at this hour? Certainly thou art not able to conceive the dreadfulness of that misery thou shouldst now have been in. And hast thou lived all this while in so great danger, and wilt thou live in it still? God forbid! Hath a miracle of mercy kept thee out of hell so long; and wilt thou yet continue securely in such danger of it? Oh ungrateful wretch! Questionless, if thou hadst any ingenuity in thee, thou wouldst be ashamed thus to abuse the patience, and long-suffering of God towards thee; which should have led thee to repentance. Thou shouldst rather take up a resolution, and say, Though I have hitherto abused the patience and long-suffering of God, I will abuse it no more. Though I have often slighted and rejected the gracious invitations of Jesus Christ, yet, through the grace of God, I will reject them no more, but close with them, and give up myself unto Christ, from henceforth to be ruled and governed by him.

God hath allotted to every man, who lives in the bosom of the church, a certain day of grace, and time of repentance; which, whosoever neglects, can never be saved. Ah sinner! as therefore thou wouldest not neglect thine own salvation; neglect not thy day of grace, neither let slip the season of mercy; but, as the Apostle exhorteth, Heb. iii. 15. *To-day, if you will hear his voice, harden not your hearts. Behold! now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation:* If that be once past, there is no recovering of it.

CHAP. VII.

Sheweth the miserable and dreadful Condition of the unregenerate in their life-time.

HAVING given you some motives to quicken up your desires and endeavours after the work of regeneration; I come now to shew you the 'means on your part to be performed for the better attaining thereunto; which may be brought to these two general heads.

1. 'The embracing some truths.'
2. 'The practising some duties.'

The truths to be embraced are these;

1. 'That every man in his state of unregeneracy, is in a miserable state, and dreadful condition.'

2. 'That there is hope of mercy for the greatest sinners.'

That you may the better understand the miserable condition of men in their state of unregeneracy; I shall shew you their miseries:

1. In this life.
2. At death.
3. After death.

Their miseries in this life are briefly these;

I. 'They are servants to sin, and slaves to their lusts;' making it their main work and design, to serve their sinful flesh with its affections. The baseness of this slavery under sin will appear the more, if we shall consider,

1. *What it is we do enthral thereby, even our precious souls*, which at first were created after the image of God, and fitted for his noble service, and communion with himself. Now, for this immortal Being to be a drudge to base pleasures and profits, to the vain and vile things of this world, is a most sad degeneration.

2. 'What are the fruits of this spiritual bondage and slavery.'

1. At the best, a little seeming pleasure, or profit, that lasts but for a moment, which the Apostle calls, *the pleasures of sin for a season*, Heb. vi. 26. they are but of little worth, and but of short continuance. And sure, it must needs be a point of folly, eagerly to pursue these sinful lusts and pleasures, which are but light and temporary, which do but appear and vanish, to the hazard of those durable riches and eternal pleasures, which are at God's right hand.

2. Another fruit, which usually follows upon our slavish subjection to our lusts, is death eternal; according to that of the Apostle, Rom. vi. 23. *The wages of sin is death*, and that eternal, as appeareth by the opposition of eternal life: for, saith the Apostle, *The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life*. So, that as eternal life followeth an holy life, so eternal death followeth a sinful life. This is the reward, sinner, that thy God whom thou servest, will pay thee at last, thou must die the death.

Oh the folly and madness of this sensual enslaved world! Sure, were there nothing in sin but the present slavery, it were enough to dissuade any ingenious spirit: Who would be a slave? a slave to lust? at the command of every unclean motion? at the beck of every brutish affection? but if the vileness of the work will not deter thee? will not the dreadfulness of the wages neither? which is eternal death and condemnation? Oh consider this, you who make so light a matter of sin, and take such pleasure in obeying the lusts thereof!

II. All men in the state of unregeneracy, are servants and slaves to the devil: which necessarily followeth upon the former, for, such as are in subjection to their lusts, must needs be under the

bondage and slavery of Satan, in that the chief power he hath over us, is, by lust to allure us into sin. I know all men are apt to say, 'That they hate and defy the devil, and abhor to be his 'slave or servant:' but yet, in the mean time, they obey his sinful commands, and thereby declare themselves to be his servants; for, as the Apostle speaketh, Rom. vi, 16. *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey?* And, saith the beloved disciple, 1 John iii. 8. *He that committeth sin is of the devil;* that is, He who gives up himself to the committing of sin, is a servant and slave to the devil, for he doth his drudgery.

Oh that the eyes of poor sinners were opened, to see who it is that put them upon all manner of sin and wickedness! Certainly they would not then be so ready and forward thereunto. Oh that they did but know in what a miserable bondage and slavery they are! Certainly then they would not be so merry, and jovial, neither would they sleep one night quietly in such a state and condition, but they would be casting about how they might be freed and delivered from the same.

III. 'All men in their state of unregeneracy are under the curse of God, which continually so hangeth over their heads, that they are cursed in every thing:'

1. 'In their estate.' Wealth and riches are in themselves good things, even the good blessings of God: but yet all the wealth of carnal and unregenerate men are accursed unto them; their very blessings are turned into curses, as the Lord threateneth by his Prophet Malachi, saying, *I will curse their blessings.*

Cursed they are, and shall be in the city, and in the field; in their basket, and in their store; in the encrease of their kine, and in the flocks of their sheep, as you have it expressed, Deut. xxviii. 17. 18. Thou enjoyest abundance of this world's goods; yet, so long as thou livest in thy wicked and ungodly courses, be it of 'lying, swearing couzening, whoring, drinking, &c. the curse of God is in thy store and abundance, which makes way for thine eternal misery.'

2. 'In their names.' Their very name is cursed: for, as the wise man speaketh, Prov. x. 7. *The memory of the just is blessed, but the name of the wicked shall rot;* that is, The just and righteous shall leave a sweet scent behind them; so that they shall not be mentioned without some commendation: but the wicked shall leave a stinking savour behind them, so that their very names shall be loathsome and abominable; like a rotten carcase they shall for a while stink above ground, and at last be utterly forgotten.

3. 'In their houses.' For as the wise man speaketh, Prov. iii. 23. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.* Tho' their houses be never so well furnished, yet, what comfort and content can there be found therein, when the curse of God is in them?

which is enough to blast the beauty, and eat up the timber and the stones thereof, Zech. v. 4.

4. 'In their religious exercises.' The word which they hear is cursed unto them. That which to others is the savour of life unto life, to them is the savour of death unto death, being a means to ripen their sins, and hasten their ruin. 'The prayers which they make are accursed unto them,' oftentimes bringing down a curse rather than a blessing. Yea, 'the table of the Lord is likewise accursed unto them.' So, that instead of feeding on the body and blood of *Christ*, they eat and drink their own *damnation*. Oh how sad and lamentable must thy condition needs be, when those things which are not only blessings in themselves, but likewise blessed unto others, should be cursed unto thee, and heighten both thy sin and sorrow. And if thy blessings become curses, O what will thy curses be!

IV. As the ground and foundation of the curse, 'All men in their state of unregeneracy are under the guilt of all their sins,' which must needs make their condition sad and dreadful. For as the *man is blessed, whose iniquity is forgiven, and whose sin is covered*, Psalm xxxii. 1. So is he most wretched and miserable, who lieth under the guilt of sin without pardon: 'His conscience being oft times tormented with such restless horrors and perplexities,' that though life be most sweet, and hell most dreadful, yet it makes a man wilfully to cast away the one, and willingly to embrace the other, that he may be freed from the horror of his guilty conscience. Thus Judas sought ease by an halter, and preferred hanging, yea, the torments of hell before the anguish of his guilty conscience. Now, thou mayest make light of unpardoned sin, thinking it no great matter: but the day is coming, when thou wouldest give all the world (if thou hadst it) for a pardon, which then cannot be had. Therefore, as ever thou wouldest stand before Christ's judgment-seat with comfort, and not be cast into everlasting burnings, now turn from thy sins, and be earnest with God in prayer, for the pardon of them in and through the merits of Christ's bloody death and passion. Art thou a sinner, and not a pardoned sinner? Oh tremble! What conscience hast thou that can let thee sleep, and sing, and laugh in such a dismal state?

V. Every man in his state of unregeneracy, is liable to all sorts of judgments.

1. To temporal judgments, as pains, sicknesses and diseases, losses, crosses, and the like. Haply, for the present thou mayest be without them, but thou canst not promise thyself freedom and exemption from the same, no not for one day: for they are continually hanging over thine head, ready every moment to seize upon thee: and they oftentimes come suddenly, when they are least expected. It is expressly noted, that when the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, at that time the sun

was risen from the earth. Little did the Sodomites expect so strange a shower after so fair a morning. Believe it, this day's ease, and rest, and mirth, may be turned into pangs, and anguish, and groanings, and roarings, before to-morrow.

2. They are liable to spiritual judgments, as blindness of mind, hardness of heart, vileness of affections, horror of conscience, and the like. The Prophet Isaiah doth elegantly decipher the miserable condition of an unregenerate man in this respect, *The wicked*, saith he, *are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt*, Isa. lvii. 20. The sea is not only oft times outwardly tossed up and down with winds and tempests, but also inwardly disquieted, even with her own motions, casting up continually mire and dirt. Even so the heart of a carnal man is not only many times outwardly troubled with crosses and afflictions, but also inwardly disquieted with the impetuous violence of filthy lusts, and the restless terrors and torments of a guilty conscience, which are far sorer than any outward afflictions, as seizing upon the tenderest part, namely the soul, and spirit of a man.

3. They are liable to eternal judgments. What can they expect, if they die in their state of unregeneracy, but after this momentary life is ended, to be cast into that everlasting fire, which 'God hath prepared for them, as well as for the devil and his angels?' which is the most dreadful condition of all: that judgment cannot be accounted small which is eternal. An eternal fever, or but an eternal tooth-ach, were a misery unspeakable: 'But what are these to the lying in that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone to all eternity?' Oh methinks, the name of eternal judgment should, if not fright him out of his wits, yet, awaken every unregenerate man out of his security; and stir him up without further delay, to abandon his wicked and ungodly course of life, and to set upon the practice of all holy and religious duties, and to labour therein, to get the work of regeneration wrought in his heart, that he may become a new creature! It may be thou hast a plentiful portion of this world's goods, enjoying what thine heart can wish or desire; but Oh, what will it profit thee to live plentifully and prosperously here, and to be eternally miserable hereafter? Thy former happiness will serve only to make thee more sensible of future miseries. And therefore, when thou art tempted to any unlawful pleasure, or profit, reason thus with thyself; 'Shall I for a short momentary pleasure, that will soon have an end, run the hazard of an eternal judgment, that will never have an end? Shall I for a little profit here, lose my soul to all eternity? What greater folly, yea, what greater madness can be imagined?'

Thus much of the miseries of the unregenerate in this life. Come we now to shew their miseries at death.

CHAP. VIII.

Sheweth the miserable and dreadful condition of the Unregenerate at their Death.

IF the life of an unregenerate man be so miserable, as hath been shewed: How doleful think you, will be his death? surely his misery then will be much increased; As will appear from the consideration of these particulars:

I. When death shall appear unto thee, and tell thee, it hath a message from the Lord, who hath sent an *Habeas Corpus* for thy body: Then comes in conscience, if a little awakened with her books of accounts, her black and bitter roll, and shews thee thy old reckonings, and arrears, setting before thee the follies of thy youth, the sins of thy riper years, and the iniquities of thy whole youth.

Ah sinner, thou who goest on impenitently in thy wicked and ungodly course of life, consider with what a ghastly countenance thou wilt look upon that black and hellish catalogue of all thy sins? thy lies and oaths, thy railing and rotten speeches, thy scoffings at God's people, thy goods ill-gotten, thy time ill-spent, thy profanation of sabbaths, thy speculative wantonness: yea, thy many actual filthinesses, and uncleannesses; thy pride, worldliness, and covetousness; thy sensual revellings, and jovial meetings. What horror will then possess thy soul, no heart of man can conceive, nor tongue of man and angels can express.

II. The devil will not be then wanting to aggravate thy sins, and to set before thee the curses and the judgments due unto thee for the same, thereby to drive thee to despair. For when *death* layeth *siege* to the *body*, then doth he most violently assault the soul; and the shorter he perceiveth his time to be, the more eagerly doth he bestir himself.

III. Death puts an end to all thy worldly comforts, and contentments, which must all die with thee, as to thy use and comfort; it salutes thee with this sad word, *Thou hast received thy good things*, now an end of thy heaven and joy. Particularly,

1. Then thou must part with all thy carnal pleasures and delights, which thou hast loved so dearly. Yea, then thou wilt find little comfort remaining of all thy former pleasures, wherein thou tookest so much content and delight; and for the enjoyment whereof, thou dispensedst not only with the duties of thy calling; but likewise with the duties of piety. Yea, it will be a very hell unto thee upon earth, to consider what eternal torments thou art like to endure, for those poor and perishing pleasures, which thou enjoyest here for a season. Are these the things for which I die? Are these the price of my soul, of my blood, of my peace?

2. Thou must part with thy wealth and riches, carrying nothing away with thee of all thy enjoyments: yea, it will be a death to thee to part with thy wealth, which was thy life; but, to consider how thou hast damned thy soul to the getting thereof, this will be a hell to thee.

3. Thou must part with all the means and opportunities of grace. Now, thou enjoyest the ordinances of Christ, as the word prayer, and sacraments, which whilst thou enjoyedst, thou hadst hope: but death puts an end to these, and thy hopes must give up their ghost. Now Christ calls upon thee, sabbath after sabbath, by his ministers and embassadors, wooing and beseeching thee to abandon thy lusts, to cast away thy sins, and to cast thyself into his arms, to accept of the reconciliation purchased by his blood. But ere long thou shalt hear no more of these things, not a sabbath more, not a sermon more, not one word more of grace, of mercy, of hope for ever. When thou wouldst give, if thou hadst them, ten thousand worlds, for one moment of that merciful time of grace, which thou hast so long abused, for a drop of that precious blood, which thou hast so long trampled under thy feet; yea, for one sabbath more, to have Christ once more tendered to thee in the ministry of the gospel; but alas, it will not be granted.

Ah sinner! Then wilt thou cry out of thy sins, and cry for mercy: Mercy, mercy, Lord, to a dying soul, that am just sinking, perishing under the load of mine iniquities. Then wilt thou begin to wish, when it is too late, that thou hadst spent thy precious time to better purpose, that thou hadst minded more the things for eternity: that thou hadst closed with the tenders and offers of Jesus Christ, and that thou hadst better improved the means and opportunities of grace, which thou didst once enjoy. Thou then wilt say, 'Oh if the Lord would be pleased to add a few years more to my life! How would I contemn the world, and the vanities thereof? How exactly would I order my conversation? How careful would I be of duty? How watchful against sin? How would I bestir myself to work out mine own salvation?' But the time of thy departure is at hand, and there is no hope of a reprieve for one day longer: and therefore all these good wishes and purposes come too late.

There are two things especially, which will aggravate a sinner's misery at his death.

1. To think what possibility of making his peace with God, he hath had all his life-time: to remember how often he hath been invited to accept of Jesus Christ, and yet would not.

2. To think that now there is no hope of mercy, having by his *sins* shut *heaven's gate*, and hardened *God's* heart against him. Surely then wilt thou in the bitterness of thy soul, cry out, and say, 'The God of mercy hath utterly forsaken me; and the devil who

knows no mercy, waits for to take me.' Ah! then which way soever thou lookest, thou wilt find nothing but matter of bitter weeping and lamentation. If thou look backward, what canst thou behold, but all the filthy and abominable lusts of thy youth unrepented of? yea, multitudes of horrid sins 'which thou hast committed in the whole course of life;' for which thou never hast been humbled, nor shed one penitential tear; the guilt of the least of them is enough to sink the body and soul into everlasting burnings.

If thou look forward, what canst thou behold but sudden destruction ready to seize upon thee? Yea, God's strict tribunal, before which thou art just making thy appearance, there immediately to be sentenced to endless torments and miseries of the other world; the sting and terrors of which thou shalt never be able either to avoid, or abide.

If thou look within thee, what canst thou behold, but thy conscience polluted and defiled; yea, accusing and condemning thee? If without thee, what canst thou behold, but the wicked world, which thou hast too much loved? and thy relations, which stand weeping about thee? a company of miserable comforters, that cannot delay the separating stroke of death one day or hour: neither can they afford thee the least dram of true comfort.

If thou look downward, what canst thou behold, but hell deserved; with her mouth open ready to swallow thee up quick? and the devils ready to receive thy soul, and carry it to that dungeon of darkness.

If upward, what canst thou behold, but a provoked enraged God? whom, because thou refusedst to hear in the day of his merciful visitation, he will now laugh at thy calamity, and mock when thy fear cometh upon thee, as himself threateneth, Prov. i. 24, 26, and in verse 28. saith the Lord, "Then shalt thou call "upon me, but I will not answer, thou shalt seek me, but thou "shalt not find me; for that thou hatest knowledge, and didst "not chuse the fear of the Lord." And verse 30. "Thou wouldst "none of my counsel, but despisedst all my reproofs. There-"fore shalt thou eat the fruit of thine own way; and be filled "with thine own desires:" that is, The wickedness which thou hast sown, shalt thou reap with all fulness. Thus, thou wilt look every where for help, yet findest thyself every way helpless, and hopeless.

Haply, thou wilt then look unto Jesus Christ, in hope that he will appear for thee, and his blood make thy atonement: but, sinner know, that though his blood be a fountain opened to all poor penitent believers, to wash away the filthy spots and stains of their sins: yet, to thee, who hast all thy life long suffered Christ to stand knocking at the door of thine heart, by the ministry of his word, by the motions of his Spirit, and by the checks

of thine own conscience, and wouldst not open unto him; to thee his blood will be then a fountain sealed, so that thou shalt not partake of the least benefit thereof, because in thy life-time thou hast so often slighted it; yea, and crucified him afresh by thy bloody sins.

Ah sinner, whither wilt thou flee for comfort in the midst of thy distress? It will then be too late to cry out, Oh that the time I have spent in taverns and ale-houses, in sports and pastimes, in carnal pleasures, and sensual delights, I had spent in prayer and fasting, in humbling and repenting! It will then be too late to cry with Balaam, *Oh that I might die the death of the righteous*, when thou hast neglected to live the life of the righteous. For, look as the life is, so commonly is the death; and as death leaves a man, so the last judgment shall find him.

And now, sinner, thy last sand being run out, thy day past, and the devil's long-looked-for day being come, who waits for thy soul, so soon as it goeth out of thy body: O what a direful screech will thy soul give, when it passeth out of thy body, into the devil's clutches, to be carried by him into the bottomless burning lake!

Oh how should the consideration of these unspeakable miseries, which are the portion of natural and unregenerate men at their deaths, startle and awaken all such worldlings and sensualists, who, so they may encrease their wealth, and satiate themselves with worldly pleasures and delights, take no thought now, nor make any provision against this dreadful day of reckoning, I mean, the day of their deaths! Surely, did they know, and feelingly apprehend, or would they be brought to believe, what horror and astonishment, what terror and anguish is like then to seize upon them; they would count it the greatest point of wisdom in the world, speedily to labour for an interest in Jesus Christ, who alone can free them, as from the sting of death, so from these horrors and astonishments which accompany the same, and would now ply as the blessed means of salvation; as reading, hearing, praying, fasting, &c. which are now their burden and bondage, yea, the matter of their mocks and scorns, would then be their daily delight and exercise.

CHAP. IX.

Sheweth the miserable and dreadful Condition of the Unregenerate after their Death.

IF this were the conclusion of unregenerate men, that death did put an end to all their miseries, happy were it for many. But this is their grief and sorrow, their woe and misery, that all this

is the beginning of their sorrows: that after all this, there is a reckoning to be made for what is past. *For as it is appointed to men once to die, so after this cometh the judgment*, Heb. ix. 23. Whereby the judgment that immediately followeth after death, the Apostle meaneth the particular judgment, which is at the end of each man's life, as is evident by this phrase, *after this*, which intendeth the time of a man's death. For as there is a *general judgment* at the end of the world: so there is a *particular judgment* that passeth upon each man at the end of this life. So soon as thy breath departeth out of thy body, it fareth with thy soul, as with that man of whom the Prophet Amos speaketh, Amos v. 19. *Who did flee from a lion, and a bear met him.* In like manner, thy soul is no sooner escaped out of a miserable world, but in a moment it is plunged into another, and greater misery.

Herein lieth a main difference between the children of God, and the wicked, The course which God taketh with his children, is this, When thy soul is set at liberty from the prison of the body, it is instantly conveyed by the angels into Abraham's bosom, as is expressly noted of Lazarus: 'And being clothed with the long white robe of Christ's righteousness, is joined to the spirits of just men made perfect.'

But with the souls of wicked and impenitent sinners, it is far otherwise; for, so soon as they depart out of their bodies, they are seized upon by wicked angels, and presently brought before God's tribunal-seat, where receiving their doom, they are instantly sent down into the kingdom of darkness, and bottom of the burning lake, there to be reserved in everlasting chains unto the great day of judgment.

II. Besides this particular judgment on the souls of the unregenerate at their deaths, there will be a general judgment on their souls and bodies re-united at the great and last day.

For the fuller clearing and opening of this great and fundamental principle of religion, I will shew you,

1. That there will be a day of judgment.
2. The person who shall be the judge.
3. The order of Christ's proceeding in judgment.

I. For the first, that there will be a day of judgment, is clear from that of the author to the Hebrews, chap. ix. 2. where he reckoneth it amongst the fundamental principles of religion. And Acts xvii. 31. The Apostle Paul speaking of God, saith, *He hath appointed a day in the which he will judge the world in righteousness.* Yea, in 2 Cor. v. 10. he puts a MUST upon it, *We must*, saith he, *all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ*, which implieth the necessity thereof.

And truly there is a necessity of a general judgment, as for the declaration of the equity of God's particular judgment, on each man at his death; in which respect it is called. *The day of the re-*

velation of the righteous judgment of God, Rom. ii. 5. so for a clear manifestation of the justice of God. Though God be most just in all his ways, yet, in this world it is not so evidently discerned. Because God in wisdom oft suffereth the wicked to prosper: yea, and to domineer over the righteous. Here the *best men* are oft times the *worst used*, and *most wronged*. Here the *true prophets* of God are fed with bread and water in their caves; whilst the *false prophets* of *Baal* fared plentifully at *Jezebel's* table. Here *Dives* sits in his palace, 'clothed richly, faring sumptuously every day; whilst Lazarus lieth at his gate, naked and hungry.' *But then God will render to every one according to his deeds.* Rom. ii. 6. Thus you see there will be a day of judgment.

O how terrible will this day of judgment be unto the unregenerate, and wicked! To them it will be a day of wrath, a day of trouble and distress, a day of darkness and gloominess; then shall the drunkard drink deepest of the cup of God's wrath: the fornicator and adulterer, who burned with the fire of lust, burn in the fire of hell. Then shall the worldling and covetous wretch feel his loads of ill-gotten goods sinking and drowning him in perdition and destruction, pressing him down to the bottom of the infernal lake.

Ah sinner! how doth it concern thee to retire into some secret place, and there seriously to ponder on this day of judgment? Ask thine heart this question, Is it certain there will be a day of judgment, or no? If it be certain; Oh then why do I not prepare for it, by breaking off my sins, and making my peace with God, before that day come upon me? Why do I not labour for an interest in Christ, by whom alone I can be freed from eternal death and condemnation? Why do I not now give all diligence to make my calling and election sure? 'Oh sinner! reason thus with thyself; thou knowest not of what advantage a few such serious thoughts may be to thy soul.'

When Paul preached to the Athenians he urged them to repent and turn from their sins, from this very ground and reason, *Because the Lord hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness*, Acts xvii. 30, 31. 'Oh repent therefore, and turn ye from your wicked ways, for why will ye die and perish eternally in your sins? Seek unto the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is nigh.' Christ now stands knocking at the door of thine heart by the ministers of his word, the motions of his Spirit, and checks of thine own conscience: Oh give him speedy and willing entertainment! The time will come when thou wilt knock with the *foolish virgins*, and shall not be heard: and repent with Judas, and not be accepted. For the Lord will have his day when thine is past, and a day of judgment for thy punishment, that didst slight and reject the day of mercy for thine amendment.

II. For the person who shall be the judge. It is Christ that shall be judge; who shall, in a visible shape, both judge and pronounce sentence upon all men, as the sentence of *absolution* on the elect; so the sentence of condemnation on the wicked.

Indeed judging the world, being a work *ab extra*, which respects the creatures, it is common to the whole trinity; so that neither the *Father*, nor the *Holy Ghost* are excluded: but yet, it is in scripture, more especially appropriated to the *Son*. And that partly as a recompence of his humiliation; and partly because the proceedings of the judgment being *visible*, it seemed convenient 'that the judge himself should be conspicuous.' And therefore *Christ* in his *human nature* shall judge the *world* and denounce the doom of *condemnation* against the wicked ones: yet shall he do all as *Immanuel*, God and man.

III. 'For the order of Christ's proceeding in judgment at the last day.

I. There will be a *citation* of all, both dead and living men, with the devils, to come to judgment. *We must all appear*, saith the Apostle, 2 Cor. v. 10. *All*, without exception of any, must make their appearance, high and low, rich and poor, king and beggar, male and female.

Oh what a great day will that be, when the whole world shall be cited and summoned to appear together at once!

Q. If you ask how they shall be summoned?

A. By a shout from heaven, and the sound of a trumpet, which shall alarm this sleeping earth, and at which hell shall shake, all graves shall open, and yield up their prisoners, which they have fast kept in the chains of *death*, from all ages since the beginning of the world. Yea, *the sea shall give up her dead which are in it*, Rev. xx. 13.

II. 'Upon this citation and summons, there will be a resurrection from the dead, and such a change of the living, as if they had been a long time dead, and were raised to life again.' And, as the graves shall then give up their dead bodies, so hell shall give up her living souls, which shall enter into their old carcases, to receive a greater condemnation; Oh, what woful salutations will there be between that body and soul, which, living together in the heighth of iniquity, must now be re-united to suffer the fulness of their misery!

III. After the resurrection follows a collection, and gathering together of all men and devils in the world; but with this difference, The elect being gathered together by angels, shall with great joy be caught up into the air to meet the Lord, Mat. xxiv. 31. But the reprobate together with the devil and his angels, shall with extreme horror and confusion, be drawn and dragged into his presence, Rev. vi. 15, 16. Ah sinner, what terror and

amazement will then seize upon thee, when like a malefactor thou art brought against thy will before the judgment-seat of Christ?

IV. After this follows a separation of the good from the bad, of the elect from the reprobate. For Christ at the first appearing of all before his judgment-seat, to testify his gracious favour and good respect to believers, separates them from others, and sets them on his right-hand, as a flock of sheep, whom he intends to take for his own. And then will he set the wicked and unbelievers on his left-hand, to testify, as his rejecting them, so, his purpose to pass a terrible doom upon them, as himself expresseth, Mat. xxv. 22, 33.

V. After this follows the conviction of the wicked, and a discovery of all their works; which is proper to go before giving of sentence. For in all our courts of justice, there is no man condemned till he be convicted. And therefore this court of Christ being the exactest court for equity and justice, we may well conclude, that there will be no man condemned, till he be convicted, and his offences laid open before all.

All the *wickednesses* of their lives shall be brought *forth* to light, and made to stare them in the face: and with such unquestionable evidence charged upon them, that they shall stand speechless before their judge, not having a word to say to excuse and acquit themselves of this dreadful charge.

Touching the means of conviction, know, that this conviction will be by the opening of two books, which we find mentioned in scripture.

1. The book of God's remembrance.
2. The book of every man's conscience.

The former we find mentioned, Mal. iii. 16. *A book of remembrance was written before God.* God hath *a book of remembrance*, as of the good works and actions of the godly: so, of the evil works and actions of the wicked, wherein their most secret abominations are registered and recorded. Sinner, all the wickednesses of thy life, the secret villanies that thine heart hath been privy to, which no eye of man ever saw, or suspected: all thy chamber sins, all thy twilight sins, all thy works of the night, and of darkness; yea, secret and open, which thou hast long since forgotten and buried out of thy sight; all these are written and booked up before the Lord against that terrible day.

The latter book, namely, the *book of conscience*, we find mentioned, Jer. xvii. 1. *The sin of Judah is written with a pen of iron, and with the point of a diamond, it is graven upon the table of their hearts.* That is, their sins are so fixed in their hearts and consciences, that they cannot be forgotten, but the memory of them all shall be revived. And with the Apostle, *Their conscience also bearing witness, and accusing them in the day, when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ*, Rom. ii. 15. In this book of

conscience, which God hath given to every man and woman, are written all their thoughts, words, and actions; yea, their sinful omissions, as well as their sinful commissions; their secret impurities, as well as their open impieties.

Ah, in what a woful case will thy heart then be! what horror and astonishment will then possess thy soul? when all thy lies and oaths, all thy railings and rotten speeches, all thy filthy and unclean thoughts, thy mispent time in taverns and ale-houses, thy worldliness and covetousness, the vanities and rebellions of thy whole life, shall be brought to thy remembrance, and at once charged upon thy graceless soul!

2. Yea, at the day of judgment, there will be a discovery of thy sins to all the world. For, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. iv. 5. *Hidden things shall on that day be brought to light.* They shall not only be called to remembrance by the sinner himself, but likewise exposed to the view and censure of others. There is no sin so secretly and closely committed, but then shall be discovered to the view of all. There is scarce a wicked man in the world, though never so formal, but he hath at some time or other, committed some such sin in secret, which he would not have others to know for all the world. But, know for certain, that at the day of judgment, all the world shall hear thereof. For then all thy secret sins, and close villanies shall be discovered, and laid open before angels, men, and devils: thy secret whoredoms, and close adulteries, thy pilferings, and stealings, thy false weights and measures, thy hypocrisies and dissemblings, shall be discovered to the view of all, and that to thine eternal shame and confusion. And therefore the day of judgment is called *the day of revelation*, Rom. ii. 5. When many murders, thefts, adulteries, and other abominations, which come not to light here, shall at that day be made known, and discovered to the view of all. Yea, then not only thy words and actions, but also thy secret thoughts and imaginations, how vain and wanton, how filthy and abominable soever they have been, shall appear to the view of all. Never, therefore, adventure upon the committing of any sin in hope of secrecy, because thou seemest safe from the eyes of men. For, suppose thy sin lieth undiscovered unto the last and great day, yet then shall it out with a witness, and be made manifest to the view of all.

Now, I know no better way to prevent the discovery of your sins at that great day, than here, in this time and day of grace, to call yourselves to an account, to search and examine your hearts and lives, and then to judge and condemn yourselves for your manifold sins and transgressions. For, as the Apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xi. 31. *If we judge ourselves, we shall not be condemned of the Lord.* Oh therefore, let us here often keep a day of judgment in our own souls and consciences, by a serious examining of ourselves concerning our sins, and judging and condemning

ourselves for the same! and then let us in all humility prostrate ourselves at the throne of grace, pleading the mercy of God and merits of Christ, for the pardon and forgiveness of them all: giving no rest to our souls, till we have some comfortable evidence and assurance thereof, which will cause us to lift up our heads with joy at the great day of account.

VI. After conviction and manifestation of all their sinful actions, follows the sentence of condemnation; and what it is, our Saviour himself hath shewed, Mat. xxv. 41. *Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* Oh dreadful sentence, every word whereof carrieth much terror in it, and breatheth nothing but woe and misery: yea, fire and brimstone.

'Depart from me,' that is, from Jesus Christ, the fountain of bliss and happiness, which in truth is a most grievous misery; for *in his presence there is fulness of joy, and pleasures for evermore.*

'Ye cursed,' To depart from Christ were hell enough, but thou must also go with a curse, even a curse that comprehends all woes and miseries under it. And truly to be under God's curse, is the quintessence of misery.

'Into everlasting fire,' What, into fire? and into everlasting fire? Ah wretches! cursed indeed. For, as the Prophet Isaiah speaketh, Isa. xxxiii. 14. *Who can dwell with devouring fire? Who can dwell with everlasting burnings?* which shall not be quenched night nor day, but fed continually with rivers of brimstone, and kept still in flame and fierceness by the unquenchable wrath of the just God, to all eternity. The torment of the wicked in hell will be, as without any intermission, so, without any end. After they have there been tormented hundreds, thousands, millions of days, years, and ages, their torments will be as far from ending, as if they were then beginning. And is not this misery enough? even beyond the expression of men or angels. If a man knew he must lie in a flaming fire but one day or hour, Oh what fear and horror would possess his soul! But what is a day, or an hour, or an age, to eternity? Oh then, what stupidity and senselessness hath possessed the hearts of sinful men, who by all this, are not frighted from their sins? The fear of Nebuchadnezzar's fiery furnace, made men do any thing to avoid it. And shall not the fear of everlasting fire in hell, make men do any thing to escape it? this methinks should awaken them, and cause them not only to humble themselves for their sins, and to beg the pardon of them; but also to cast away their transgressions; to strive against them, watch against them, pray against them: begging power and strength from Christ, to keep down the power of their lusts, that hurry them on in their sinful ways. It is one of the wonders of the world, how men, who do believe the word of Christ to be true, that *the wicked shall go into everlasting fire,* can wittingly

and wilfully adventure upon sinful ways, the end whereof they know will be so dreadful and astonishing.

'Prepared for the devil and his angels,' that is, You shall not only be cast into a lake of fire and brimstone, but you shall there dwell with those hellish fiends, the devil and his angels, who will be continually insulting over you with hellish exprobrations, for neglecting so great salvation, offered unto you time after time; and being so foolish, as to lose the joys and pleasures of heaven, which last to all eternity, for the enjoyment of some base lust, which lasted but for a season.

Oh what terror and trembling, what horror and amazement will seize on their souls, that have received this dreadful sentence of condemnation! How will they then run like men distracted to the mountains and hills for covert and shelter? How will they then beg and yell again for mercy, to a judge that is justly inexorable? I say justly inexorable to them, having scornfully rejected his many loving invitations, and earnest beseechings by his ministers, to accept of that peace and reconciliation, which he hath purchased by his blood. Oh that men would consider, that one tear or sigh of a penitent heart, will now more prevail for attainment of mercy, than all their bitter and importunate yellings in that great day of God's wrath!

VII. After the promulgation of the sentence, followeth the execution, and sending of the persons judged to their everlasting estate; as it is written, Mat. xxv. 46. *And these shall go away into everlasting punishment.* So that now comes the eternal separation from Christ, and possession of those torments, which are easeless and endless. For then shall they be hurried by the devils as their jailors, out of Christ's presence, and dragged into the bottomless lake of outer darkness. Oh the hellish cries, and horrid shrieks that will then be heard! no heart can conceive, or imagine what an hideous cry it will be.

Hadst thou now an heart, to turn from thy sins unto God, by true and unfeigned repentance; and to pray unto him for mercy in and through the merits of Jesus Christ, there were hope of mercy. But at the day of judgment, thy repentance and thy prayers will nothing avail. The judge will not then be entreated by thee; and no marvel, seeing thou wouldst not hearken to him in the day of his merciful visitation: But though he sent unto thee, messenger after messenger, ambassador after ambassador, to woo and beseech thee to abandon thy sins, and to accept of him for thy Lord and Saviour; yet wouldst thou not leave one beloved sin, nor deny one fleshly lust for all his intreaties. And therefore on that day will he not be intreated by thee, notwithstanding thy manifold cries and prayers. If thou wilt not believe me, hear Christ's own words to that purpose, Prov. i. 24. &c. "Because I have called, "and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man re-

"garded. But ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would "none of my reproof; I will also laugh at your calamity, I will "mock when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruc- "tion as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon "you: then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer: they "shall seek me early, but they shall not find me." Oh! how will it then wound thy very soul, to remember thy folly, in neglecting thy season, and refusing so great salvation.

Ah sinner, that thou wouldst now forethink of this dreadful time, and woful misery, which hangs over thine head! that when thou art alone, thou wouldst seriously consider with thyself, as the certainty and dreadfulness of this day, so, what thy condition is like to be! that thou mightest thereby be stirred up to make out after Christ, by whom thou mayest escape the wrath to come.

CHAP. X.

Shewing the miserable and dreadful Condition of the Unregenerate after the Day of Judgment.

HAVING shewed you the miserable estate of the unregenerate at the day of judgment. I shall proceed to shew you, their dreadful estate after the day of judgment: which, in general, is most cursed; and therefore saith our Saviour unto them, Mat. xxv. 41.

Depart from me ye cursed. That cursed estate is manifest,

1. By privation of all felicity.
2. By subjection to all misery.
3. By sundry resemblances.
4. By the perpetuity thereof.

Of these in their order.

I. The miserable and cursed estate of the unregenerate, consists in their privation of all that happiness, which believers do enjoy in the presence of God, *in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore.* Were there no positive sensible misery, this privation of God's presence were enough (if they understood it) to make the damned's future estate most accursed, to make hell to be hell, without any fire. For, as fulness of joy and pleasure is had, by the enjoying of God's presence, so, fulness of grief and sorrow, doth possess the hearts of all those who are deprived thereof. Couldst thou be but for one moment wrapt up into heaven, and see a glimpse of that infinite glory, which God hath prepared for all that love and fear him, thou wouldst soon acknowledge as much.

II. Besides this 'privation of felicity, there is a subjection to

all misery.' Besides the *pain of loss* there is a *pain of sense*, which the damned endure: which is in itself intolerable, unutterable, and unconceivable. It were misery enough to be tormented with the gout, cholic, stone, tooth-ache, or the like: but, should all these, together with the most exquisite tortures, that the wit of man could invent, meet together in one man, at one instant, yet, would they come infinitely short of these. All pains and torments, all racks and tortures whatsoever, which men are capable of suffering here, are but sparks, in comparison of the flames of God's wrath; and flea-bites to the stings and scorpions beneath; where there is torment without ease, horror without comfort, wrath without pity: there are no sorrows like to the sorrows of the damned, wherewith the Lord afflicteth them in the day of his fierce wrath; when he will pour out all the vials of his fury upon them, and will make them at once to pay for all the wrongs they have done to his name, for the contempt of his mercy, their affronts to his justice, for the abuse of his patience, and long-suffering, for their mispent time, for their swearing, and cursing, for their whoring, and drinking, for their profaning his sabbaths, for their hating, and persecuting his people.

Oh! what weeping and wailing? what sighing and groaning? what cursing and banning will there then be heard?

The extremity of the torments of hell, further appeareth in this, that they are universal. Not only this or that part of thy body shall be tortured and tormented, but every part and member thereof. As all have joined in sin, so must they all partake of the torment.

The pain which men here endure, is for the most part particular, some pained in their head, some in their back, and some in their feet; and some of these pains are oft-times so extreme, as thou wouldst not willingly undergo them to gain a world. But, for a man to be tortured and tormented in every part and member of his body at once, must needs be very grievous: which is the condition of all the damned in hell.

By this, you may a little conceive the extremity of their torments: but, if I had the tongue of men and angels, I could not express it to the full. For, as in heaven there is such a fulness of joy, as the heart of man is not able to conceive, much less the tongue of man able to express; so, in hell there is such a fulness of sorrow and torment, as is both beyond expression or conception.

Oh sinner, wouldst thou never come into this place of torment? descend into it daily: look into the pit often, if thou wouldst not fall into it: If heaven, and all the joy and glory there will not afford arguments enough, to draw thee on after thy God: see, if hell, and all the torments thereof, will not yield thee arguments enough to withdraw thee from thy sins. In all temptations unto sin, consider the fearful issue and effect thereof: and, though it

seem never so delightful and agreeable to thy natural humour, yet ask, But what comes after? Let the dreadful consequence thereof, which (without true and unfeigned repentance) is no less than eternal fire, deter thee from the same. Ah sinner, sinner! when thou art bathing thy soul by the fire of lust, consider, how for the same thou mayest burn in the everlasting flames of hell. When thou art drenching thyself with the voluptuous draughts of thy carnal pleasure, think what a drench, what a poisonous and bitter cup is prepared for thee below: and this may be a special means to kill that lust, which will otherwise kill thy soul. Want of consideration of the fearful issues and effects of sin, is questionless the cause of so much sin and wickedness in the world.

III. The misery of the damned is set forth in scripture by sundry resemblances: as,

1. Darkness; yea, outer darkness. *But the children of the kingdom shall be cast into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth*, Mat. viii. 12. As light is one of the most comfortable things that man can enjoy; so darkness is most horrible and terrible. Darkness was one of the Egyptian's plagues, which were all fearful effects of God's wrath. It is counted a great severity of punishment to cast men into a dark dungeon: for, darkness do much affright men, especially, if they hear hideous and terrible noises. What then will be the darkness of hell? where shall be nothing but weeping and wailing, howling, and gnashing of teeth, with such like effects of fearful terror. This is called *outer darkness*, because it is out of the place of bliss, the place of light, which is no small aggravation thereof.

2. Torment; as Luke xvi. 23. *And in hell the rich man lift up his eyes, being in torment.* Now torment is an extremity of pain, whereof man is very sensible, and which is highly grievous unto him. Many torments, which men inflict, cause such as are tormented to cry and howl, and wish they were dead, rather than to live in such torment. Oh then, what is the torment, which God, in his fierce wrath, inflicteth on the damned in hell! whom he will make to feel his heavy hand, to be the hand of a mighty God. All tortures and torments considered together, are not comparable thereunto. Take the pains of all diseases incident to our nature: as stone, gout, cholic, cramp, or what other can be named. Add hereunto, all the most exquisite tortures that cruel men have inflicted upon others: as rack, strapado, boiling in lead, pulling the flesh from the bones with hot pincers, and such like. Add also hereunto, all the anguish, horror and terror, that ever any man felt in his soul, mind and conscience: let all these be joined together, they are but a flea-bite, in comparison of hell-torments. The reason is evident because all the forementioned torments here endured, may stand with God's love, and are often inflicted on his dear children: but, that torment is a

fruit of his wrath, wherein he sets himself to make sinners feel the weight of his indignation.

O foolish sinner! thy pleasures are tormenting pleasures; thy gains, and thine ease, that now thou blessest thyself in, they are tormenting gains, a tormenting ease. Now thou drinkest the sweet, but beware whatever they are in thy mouth, they are torment in thy belly. Buy not an hour's ease or pleasure, at the price of an eternity of torment.

3. Another resemblance, whereby the misery of the damned is set forth, is *fire*, as Mat. xviii. 9. This of all other metaphors is most frequently used, and of all others it is the fittest. For, *fire* is the fiercest kind of torment that is, and the most intolerable. Great question is made about the kind of it, 'Whether the fire of hell be material and corporeal fire, or no?' Surely it is such a fire, as shall torment both body and soul, and that much more intolerable, than any fire here below. *Brimstone* mingled with fire, makes it burn more fiercely: therefore *brimstone* is oft added to hell-fire, to aggravate the torment thereof. Yea, it is said to be *a Lake of fire and brimstone*, Rev. xx. 10. which implieth a great quantity thereof, to make it the hotter.

This methinks, should sour the pleasure of all thy sinful lusts, and provoke thee forthwith to set upon that stricter course of life, that more serious, circumspect, conscientious walking, whereby thou mayest escape those heavy things.

Oh, look about thee while it is called to-day! run over to Christ, lay hold on his righteousness, stoop to his sceptre; beg of God, that whatsoever he deny thee, he would not deny his Son to thee, by whom alone thou canst be saved from this tormenting fire. Otherwise, wo and alas, that ever thou wert born.

But oh, how wonderfully prodigal are we generally of our souls, when that for the vile things here below, we are so ready to prostitute them to the lust of Satan; and expose them to the torments of hell-fire. Whereas, alas, *What is it to gain the world, and to lose our souls?* What, to spend our days in mirth and jollity, and in a moment to be cast into hell? It is easy for a secure unbelieving soul, to read and hear of this fire. But wo, and ten thousand woes to all such, who shall feel, and endure, and prove by their experience how hot it is.

IV. The misery of the damned is likewise set forth in scripture, by the perpetuity, and eternity of their torment. *Their worm dieth not, and their fire is not quenched, but continueth to burn without end*, Mark ix. 44. And therefore is called, *unquenchable fire*, and, *everlasting fire*. As the Salamander is said to live in the fire: so, shall the wicked live for ever in the fire of hell. Though they seek for death, yet they shall not find it: though they be always burning, yet they shall not be consumed; though they be always gnawed upon by the worm of conscience, yet they shall never be

devoured: which makes the misery of the damned in hell, most exquisitely miserable.

If there might be any end of their torments, though it should be after so many millions of years, as there are sands on the sea shore, or stars in the firmament, it would be some comfort to those who endure them. But, eternity is the very hell of hells, and that which most of all breaks the very hearts of the damned. The present sense of pain being not so grievous to the damned, as it is to think, that after thousands, yea, thousand thousands of years, they shall be as far either from end, or from ease, as they were the first hour of their falling into it. Surely, if to a man tormented with the gout, stone, or cholic, one night seemeth exceeding long: Oh, how long do you think eternity, (that night which shall never know morning) will seem to those who shall lie tormented, and roaring in a bed of flame, with wicked fiends, and devils about them, daily and hourly adding to their torment? If one short night's pain be so tedious and grievous, what will that eternal night be?

Oh that I could prevail with thee once a day, to steep thy thoughts in a serious meditation of the eternity of hell torments! Certainly it would abate the heat of thy lusts, and take off the edge of thy love to thy utmost-pleasing vanities, and stop thee in the eager pursuit of thy carnal pleasures. For wouldst thou be content to run the hazard of such torments, for thy present ease? of such plagues, for thy present pleasures? of such an eternity, for a few jocund hours? Oh when wilt thou awake from this folly!

Thus much, for the clearing and setting forth of the first truth to be embraced, towards the working of regeneration in men's souls; namely, That every man in his state of unregeneracy, is in a miserable and dreadful condition. Wherein I have the longer insisted, that thereby I might startle and awaken unregenerate men out of their carnal security, unto a lively sense and apprehension of the dreadful danger they are in, so long as they live and die in their unregenerate estate: and so countermine the great design of the devil against their souls, which is to keep them blindfold and ignorant of their wretched miserable state, by persuading them, that their condition is as good and safe as the best.

Now stand, sinner, stand and pause a while on what hath been hitherto spoken. Look back and consider, Is this thy state? Is this thy portion, which hath hitherto been described? Art thou a sinner? a wilful and impenitent sinner? and doth not all this belong to thee? Search the scriptures, believe the scriptures, and then say, if this be not the place of them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of Christ.

But, hearken sinner, Wilt thou escape? wilt thou be redeemed? wilt thou be delivered from all this? would he be a messenger of good tidings? wouldst thou bid him welcome, that should

bring thee news of redemption from all this? why, is there any hope of that? hope of deliverance? hope of salvation? what, for such a sinner? what, from so great destruction? why, wilt thou hearken? Consider, consider, what shall further be spoken; and thou shalt see, that *there* is yet hope for thee, even for thee, concerning this thing. As great as thy sins are, as great as thy danger is, if thou wilt then, there is hope, that thou mayest be saved.

CHAP. XI.

Sheweth that there is hope of Mercy, for the worst of Sinners.

II. ANOTHER truth to be embraced, in order to thy regeneration, is this, 'That there is hope of mercy for the worst of sinners.'

Though the condition of men, in their state of unregeneracy, be very deplorable, yet, it is not desperate: there is hope of mercy for the worst of them, which will appear from a due consideration.

1. Of God's willingness to save the worst of sinners.
2. Of the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice.
3. Of Christ's readiness to embrace all poor sinners, who will but come unto him, and receive him upon the terms of the gospel.

1. God's willingness to save the worst of sinners, appeareth from his many gracious promises, to receive them upon their repentance, Isa. lv. 7. "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the "unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the "Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for "he will abundantly pardon." And, saith the Prophet Ezekiel, Ezek. xviii. 21, 22. "If the wicked will turn from all his sins "that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that "which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die: "All his transgressions that he hath committed, they shall not "be mentioned unto him, in his righteousness that he hath done, "he shall live." These, and such like gracious promises of God in his word, for the encouragement of poor sinners, to turn from their sins unto him, cannot but strongly argue his willingness to have them saved.

2. As if this were not enough to set forth God's willingness; to his promises, he hath added his oath, *As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked but that the wicked turn from his way, and live*, Ezek. xxxiii. 11. Here the Lord sweareth by himself, there being no greater to swear by; as if he had said, As sure as I am the true and living God, so certainly I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that

he should turn from his wicked ways, and embrace my mercy in Jesus Christ. Because wicked men are so hardly persuaded of God's willingness to save them, therefore to convince them thereof, and encourage them to turn from their sins unto him, he takes his oath on it, that he is infinitely more willing that wicked men should repent, and be saved, than that they should perish in their sins, and be damned.

3. God's willingness appeareth from his free offer and tender of Christ to all who will but receive him by the hand of faith; as none are named, so none are excluded. The angel that brought from heaven the tidings of Christ's birth, saith, that it was for all people: *Behold*, saith he, *I bring you tidings of great joy which shall be to all people:* there being no state or condition of men which God hath excluded from salvation by Christ, which doth clearly evidence his willingness to save poor sinners.

Oh sinner! seeing God doth freely offer Christ to all, without exception of any, do not thou except thyself, limit not where God hath not limited; say not I am unworthy, or my sins are many and heinous, cloathed with many aggravating circumstances: but stir up thyself to adventure thy soul on Christ, upon the general offer of him in the Gospel. The first work of faith in many hath been to adventure their souls on Christ upon the free offer of him to all indefinitely. Do thou in like manner adventure to cast thyself upon the free grace of God in Christ, with resolution to abandon thy lusts for the time to come, and to take Christ for thy Lord and Husband, as well as for thy Priest and Saviour. This is that which God requireth; and if he hath persuaded thine heart to this, it is a good sign that mercy is intended for thee.

4. His willingness further appeareth by his sending ministers as his ambassadors unto poor sinners, upon terms of peace and reconciliation, as the Apostle expresseth, 2 Cor. v. 20. *We are ambassadors to beseech you to be reconciled to God.* As if he had, We are commanded by the *Lord* our *Master*, to offer you terms of peace and *reconciliation*, to proffer you *peace* and *pardon*, if you will heartily turn from your sins unto God: We are sent as ambassadors to acquaint you what Christ hath done, and suffered for your redemption, how he hath fulfilled the Law for you, and offered up his life as a sacrifice and satisfaction to God's justice for your sins; and how you may be happy for ever, if you will rest upon Christ's perfect righteousness, and all-sufficient sacrifice for life and salvation, and give up yourselves unto him, to serve and obey his laws and commandments. I do here therefore as God's ambassador, in his name, proclaim to the worst of you, to the greatest and oldest sinner, that you may have mercy and salvation, if you will abandon your lusts and close with Jesus Christ, upon the terms of the gospel, receiving him for your *King*, *Priest*, and *Prophet*.

Oh how can we but stand amazed at the riches of God's mercy and goodness, that when we, upon the knees of our souls, should have sought unto him for peace and reconciliation, yet that he, being the great Lord of heaven, and of earth, should condescend so far, as to send ambassadors unto us, sinful dust and ashes, to intreat us to be reconciled to him, to accept his grace and favour! Oh how doth this evidence his great willingness that poor sinners should not perish, but have everlasting life. Certainly if God had taken more pleasure in your damnation than in your salvation, he would never have sent his ministers as ambassadors to shew you the way and means of salvation, by receiving Christ as your Lord and Saviour, and giving up yourselves unto him: he would never have persuaded you by so many arguments and beseeched you to turn, from your sins, unto him, that your souls might live in glory to all eternity.

6. 'God's willingness to save the very worst of sinners, is most lively represented in the parable of the prodigal,' as it is recorded, Luke xv. 20. &c. where we read how the *prodigal* no sooner resolved to go to his Father, and acknowledge his offences, but his Father prevented him: for, *when he was a great way off, his Father saw him, and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck, and kissed him;* Where there are several passages very observable in the father of the prodigal.

1. His quick observation. 'For when he was yet a great way off, his Father saw him. Before he espyed his Father, his Father saw him.' Though God is many times unwilling to see the sinner, yet is he at all times very willing to espy the penitent. Yea, no sooner doth a sinner resolve to turn from his sins unto God, but he espies him and pities him.

2. His present commiseration. 'His Father saw him and had compassion on him.' Though God looks on obstinate sinners with indignation, yet he looks on the penitent with commiseration. When the heart of a sinner is penitentially touched, then the bowels of God's mercy are moved within him. When *Ephraim repented and turned, the Lord saith, My bowels are troubled for him, I will surely have mercy on him.* Jer. xxxi. 20.

3. His speedy readiness to embrace him. It is said, the son *went* to his father, but the father *ran* to meet his penitent son, shewing how ready and swift the Lord is to shew mercy to a penitent returning sinner. A sinner no sooner returns from his sins unto God by repentance, but God turns to him in mercy.

4. His wonderful tenderness. 'The Father fell on his neck.' To have taken him by the hand had been much, but to fall on his neck and embrace him, and that as he was in his stinking loathsome rags, was a greater favour than could be expected. How open are the arms of mercy to embrace a penitent returning sinner!

5. His strong affection, expressed by 'kissing his penitent son,'

for, as it follows, 'He kissed him. He did not only embrace him, but he likewise kissed him. And as St. Austin observeth, *Nondum uno verbo audito, squalidum & deformem amplectitur, &c.* before the Son had spoken one word unto his father, the father falleth upon his neck, and kissed his ragged and deformed son;' which sheweth God's willingness to receive and embrace all poor penitent sinners, that have but a thought of turning from their sins unto him. Yea, the father's kissing of his returning son, *was to shew* that he *rejoiced* as much at *his penitential return* as he had grieved at his sinful departure.

Oh sinner, What an encouragement should this be unto thee to to turn from thy sins unto God! who hath, as an eye of mercy to espy a returning sinner, so an heart full of mercy and compassion, to pity a returning sinner; and feet of mercy, to meet a returning sinner: and arms of mercy, to embrace a returning sinner; and lips of mercy, to kiss a returning sinner, in token that he is reconciled to them. O therefore let me prevail with thee, whosoever thou art, how many and heinous soever thy sins are, to turn from them unto God by true and unfeigned repentance, and that with hope of mercy and acceptance in and through the merits and intercession of Jesus Christ.

II. That there is hope of mercy for the worst of sinners, appeareth from the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice offered upon the cross, and the fulness of satisfaction that was thereby made to the justice of God for the sins of the whole world. So much the apostle expresseth, where he saith, *He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him.* The word translated, *able*, doth imply power to do a thing. And the word *eis to panteles*, translated *uttermost*, is of a very large extent; it extends so far that we cannot look beyond it, no not in our thoughts: for, let a man imagine his cause to be never so desperate, his sins to be never so many and heinous, yet Christ by his death, is able to save him from them all.

And therefore this we must lay as a foundation-truth, that Christ's sacrifice was a full satisfaction to the justice of his Father for the sins of the world; it being the sacrifice of the Son of God, even of him who was God as well as man. For this is that which added an infinite value to what Christ did and suffered for our redemption, that it was the obedience, and the sufferings of the Son of God; of him who was God equal with the Father.

Labour, therefore, to get thine heart truly satisfied in the all-sufficiency of Christ's Sacrifice, that his death was a full satisfaction to God's Justice for thy sins; for, otherwise, when either thy conscience or the devil begin to aggravate thy sins, and to set before thee the number and the heinousness of them, thou wilt be at a loss, and even ready to sit down in despair: whereas if thou didst clearly apprehend what full satisfaction the death of Christ was to

God's justice for all thy sins, thou wouldest not fear what either thy conscience or the devil could object against thee. In Rom. viii. 33. we read how the apostle from the consideration of Christ's all-sufficient sacrifice and full satisfaction to God's justice by his death, did triumph over sin, and satan. For having treated thereof in the former part of the chapter; in the latter part thereof, ver. 33, 34. he speaks as one ravished with abundance of comfort, yea, challengeth the devil and all the world to object what they could against the pardon of his sins: *Who*, saith he, *shall lay any thing to the* charge of *God's Elect? It is God that justifieth: Who is he that condemneth? it is* Christ that died. As if he had said, let conscience and carnal reason, let law and sin, let hell and devil object what they can, let them object the number and heinousness of my sins, what is that? seeing Christ *hath died*, even Christ the Son of God, hath offered up his own life as an all-sufficient sacrifice, and thereby abundantly satisfied God's justice for my sins. Beloved, the case between God and us and our Saviour Jesus Christ, is not much unlike the case of a creditor, a debtor, and a surety. Though the debtor be altogether unable to satisfy his debt, or to contribute any thing thereunto, yet if his surety have fully discharged the debt, and cancelled the bond, the debtor is safe enough from imprisonment, or danger of arrest. In like manner though we were much indebted unto God, and were no way able to make the least satisfaction for our sins, yet seeing our surety Jesus Christ, hath taken upon him the debt of our sins, and fully satisfied God's justice for the same, by offering up his own life as an all-sufficient sacrifice upon the cross, we shall not need to fear the accusations of conscience, or of carnal reason, or of all the devils in hell, if we do apply the merits of Christ's death unto our own soul's comfort.

III. That there is hope of mercy for the worst of sinners, appeareth from Christ's *willingness to* receive and embrace all poor sinners, *who will but come unto him*, and receive him upon the terms of the gospel.

1. Christ's willingness appeareth from his frequent *personal invitations of all* sorts of sinners, *even the worst, to come unto him* for life and salvation, *as* Mat. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.* In which we find no exceptions either of persons or sins: but whosoever thou art, rich, or poor, male or female, how many and heinous soever thy sins are, if thou art but sensible of them, thou art invited to go to Jesus Christ, and to cast thyself, and the burden of thy sins upon him, And, Rev. xxii. 17. *Let him that is a thirst come, And whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely*, that is, In whomsoever there is but an earnest will, and longing desire to partake of Christ, and of the benefit of his death and passion, they are invited to come unto him. Now, these gracious invitations of

Jesus Christ unto poor thirsty sinners to come unto him, that their souls might live, must needs argue his incomparable willingness to have them saved.

2. Christ knowing our backwardness to come unto him; to the forementioned invitations, adds his awakening excitation, or proclamation, crying out, *Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters*, &c. Isa. lv. 1. And, because many poor souls are apt to say, 'Alas! there is nothing in me to commend me unto Christ, I have no goodness, no righteousness of mine own;' therefore Christ adds, *He that hath no money*, that is, he that hath no goodness, no righteousness of his own, which is there meant by *money*, let him come. And indeed they are the fittest to go unto Jesus Christ, for it is the empty soul that is most capable of Christ, the soul emptied of all self-righteousness, and self-goodness. Whereas that soul, which, with the church of Laodicea, is rich and full, with a conceit of its own righteousness, hath no room for Christ.

3. Christ's willingness appeareth by the many sweet and gracious promises, which he hath made in his word unto all those who by faith come unto him. As that *known* promise, Mat. xi. 28. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;* that is, I will ease you, and refresh you, I will comfort you with the assurance of the pardon of your sins, I will give you peace of conscience here, and eternal peace and rest with me for ever in my kingdom. And questionless, one special reason, why many find so little peace and comfort in their souls, is, because they go not unto Jesus Christ, they cast not themselves and the burden of their sins upon him, who is the fountain of peace and comfort, and from whom alone it is to be had.

And Mark xvi. 15, 16. saith our Saviour, *He that believeth shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned:* that is, He who goeth out of himself unto Christ for life, shall be saved. But he that believeth not shall be damned, that is, He who refuseth to go unto Jesus Christ, preferring his lusts and corruptions before him, shall be cast into that burning lake, where is nothing but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth.

Oh how earnestly doth Christ press sinners to come unto him, that they might have life! promising heaven, and salvation upon their coming; and threatening hell, and damnation, upon their refusing: and, what more prevailing argument could he use, to persuade sinners to come unto him? which must needs evidence his exceeding and great willingness to embrace them with the arms of his mercy upon their coming.

4. Christ's willingness appeareth by his rejecting of none who sincerely go unto him, though never so weak and worthless in themselves. Never did any sinner go to him, but he accepted of him, as himself expresseth, John vi. 37. *All that the Father giveth*

me, shall come to me, and him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out; but receive him to mercy. Hath Christ promised this, and will he not be as good as his word? Did he ever break his word with any poor soul, though never so unworthy? Did he ever cast away any who came unto him? And is he not the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever?

Go sinner, fear not, go upon the credit of this word, which he hath spoken, *I will in no wise cast them out.* Though the devil say, Go not; though thy misgiving heart say, Go not, he will not regard thee, he will never look on such a vile wretch, he will cast thee out; yet since, he hath said, He will not, go, and thou shalt find mercy.

Thus have I by several demonstrations proved, 'as God the Father's willingness to save the worst of sinners; so Christ's readiness to embrace all poor sinners, who will but come unto him for life and salvation;' wherein I have the longer insisted, because I know no better argument to prevail with sinners, to turn from their sins unto God by true and unfeigned repentance, and to close with Jesus Christ by a true and lively faith, than a serious consideration, as of God's readiness to save the worst of sinners, upon their turning unto him; so, of Christ's willingness to embrace all poor sinners, who will come unto him, and receive him, as their Lord and Saviour.

I have read a story of a gentlewoman, who was condemned to die for killing her own child, whereupon divers ministers came to visit her, and perceiving her a little affected with her sin, and sad condition, they laboured to set before her, the heinousness of her sin, and the dreadfulness of her condition, without hearty and deep repentance: all which little moved her, seeming rather the more hardened in her sin: But, at last, another reverend divine hearing of her obdurate hardness, notwithstanding all that was said unto her; went and preached unto her the abundant riches of God's mercy in Christ, how ready he was to embrace, with the arms of his free grace, every penitent sinner; and, how willing Christ was to receive all poor sinners, who would go unto him, and cast themselves into his arms, how many and heinous soever their sins were: and, thereupon, told her, there was hope of mercy for her, if she were heartily sorry for her sins, and would adventure her soul upon Christ; notwithstanding the greatness and heinousness of her sin. What! mercy for Me said she, that is impossible! &c. Whereupon the minister proceeded further to set forth the freeness of God's grace, and riches of his mercy to all penitent and believing sinners, declaring unto her, how God delighted in mercy; and, that where sin hath abounded, there his grace and mercy would much more abound; or to that purpose. And thereupon she presently fell a weeping, wringing her hands, and crying for

mercy; and died very comfortably, as it is related; having had the mercy of God abundantly revealed to her before her death.

And truly, sinner, as it was my design, so my heart's desire in setting forth God's willingness to save the very worst of sinners upon their repentance; and Christ's readiness to embrace them with the arms of his mercy, that it might have the same effect in thee, as it had in the aforementioned gentlewoman. And Oh that the consideration thereof would melt thine heart into tears of unfeigned sorrow, for thy sins past, and stir thee up to turn from them unto God, by hearty repentance, and to close with Jesus Christ upon the terms of the gospel! Oh that I could prevail with thee, as to give a bill of divorce to thy lusts and corruptions, so to give up thyself unto Christ, and to adventure thy soul upon him, resting upon his perfect righteousness, and all-sufficient sacrifice, for the pardon of thy sins here, and for eternal life and salvation hereafter! If Christ be so willing to receive thee, why shouldst not thou be willing to go unto him, and that with confidence and acceptance? Salvation is this day offered unto thee, the golden sceptre is holden out unto thee: O stretch forth the hand of faith, to lay hold and embrace the Lord Jesus Christ! so shalt thou be happy to all eternity; *For whosoever believeth in Jesus Christ, shall not perish, but have everlasting life.* Thus much of the truth to be embraced, in order to your regeneration.

CHAP. XII.

Sheweth the Duties to be practised, in order to your Regeneration.

HAVING shewed you the *truths* to be embraced, in order to your regeneration; I come now to the *duties* on your part, to be practised, and performed.

I. From the consideration of the dreadfulness of thy condition, so long as thou continuest in thine unregenerate state; and of the hope that thou hast of a blessed change; 'Stir up in thyself an earnest longing, restless desire after the new birth;' that thou mayest in truth say, 'O that I were regenerate and born anew! Oh that the image of the devil might be razed out, and the image of God imprinted in me! Oh that a blessed change were wrought in my soul, a change from nature to grace, from darkness to light, from the kingdom of Satan, to the kingdom of the Lord Jesus! Oh that I might become a new creature, renewed throughout, in all the faculties of my soul, and all the parts of my body!'

And, know, for thy comfort; if thou canst find any such longing desire in thy soul, thou art not far from this new birth, from the work of regeneration in thy soul. For this longing desire af-

ter this new birth, will put thee upon the use of all the ordinances and means, God hath sanctified for the attaining thereof.

II. 'Labour to get thine heart deeply and thoroughly affected with a sense of thy miserable condition by nature.' It is not sufficient to know thy condition to be sad and deplorable, so long as thou continuest in thine unregenerate estate: but thy care and endeavour must be, to get thine heart thoroughly affected therewith. If you look into the scriptures, you shall find this qualification required in the persons whom Christ came to save, and whom he invites to come unto him. Our blessed Saviour, speaking to Zaccheus, saith, Luke xix. 10. *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost.* Where, by the *lost*, whom Christ came to save, are not meant every sinner, who indeed are lost men, but such as have a spiritual feeling of the woful plight and condition, wherein they are by reason of their sins. And, again, saith our Saviour, Mat. ix. 13. *I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.* As by the *righteous* are meant, such as are so in their own opinion, and conceit; so, by *sinners* are meant, such as are sensible of their wretched miserable condition, and groan under the weight and burden of their sins; whom Christ especially invites to come unto him, saying, *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest*, Mat. xi. 28.

Q. If any shall ask, 'How may I get my heart deeply affected with a sense of my miserable condition by nature?'

A. 1. 'Steep thy thoughts frequently in a serious meditation of thy sad and deplorable condition, so long as thou continuest in thy unregenerate estate.' How thou art no better than a servant to sin, and slave to thy lusts, under the bondage and command of Satan, doing his drudgery: yea, and under the curse of God, and guilt of all thy sins, and liable to all sorts of judgments, both *temporal*, *spiritual*, and *eternal*. Consider likewise, the miseries which will accompany thee at thy death, and after thy death, even at the day of judgment, and after the day of judgment, when thou shalt not only be deprived of all happiness, but exposed to such miseries, as neither the tongue of man can express, nor the heart of man can conceive, and that to all eternity, if thou diest in thy unregenerate estate. Ah sinner! if thou wouldst but frequently chew this bitter pill, it would not only purge thee of thy sinful corruptions and noisome humours, which now are predominate in thee, but likewise exceedingly contribute to thy spiritual health and welfare.

2. Be earnest with God in prayer, that by his Spirit he would convince thee of thy miserable condition by nature, and make thee truly and thoroughly sensible thereof.

III. 'Labour to be truly humbled for thy sins, as the cause of thy present sad condition.' It is not sufficient to get thine heart, in some measure affected with the sense thereof; but thy care must likewise be, to get thine heart into an humbled and broken frame

for the same. Having spent many years in sinning; What canst thou do less, than spend some hours in mourning and sorrowing for the same? which usually goeth before, or at least accompanieth our new birth: for, as no child is ordinarily born without some throws; so, no man is ordinarily regenerated, and born anew by the Spirit, without some pangs of sorrow and humiliation, though not all with a like measure: it being sanctified by God, to be the entrance into the state of grace. O therefore, labour in the use of all means God hath sanctified, to get thine heart kindled, humbled and broken for thy sins! To this end,

1. Look back into thy life; and call to mind as many of thy sins as possibly thou canst; the sins of thy youth, as well as of thy riper years; thy sins of omission, as well as thy sins of commission; yea, the sins of thy holy services: especially call to mind the greatest and grossest of thy sins, though they were committed long ago. Thus did the *prodigal* begin his *humiliation* and *repentance*, by a serious examination of his former course of *life*, calling to remembrance his departure from such a gracious *father:* his own wanderings in the ways of wickedness, in which he had lost himself, and then as the text noteth, Luke xv. 18. He arose, and came to his father, and with tears, said unto him, *Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.* To acknowledge thyself in the general to be a sinner, works but a formal kind of repentance and humiliation, if any at all: but, if thou wouldst be truly humbled, thou must descend to thy special and particular sins, saying, 'This evil have I done, and that good have I left undone.'

2. 'Consider, together with the number, the heinousness of thy sins.' To this end, call to mind the aggravating circumstances of them; as, how thou hast sinned against the motions of God's Spirit, the admonitions of his ministers, the checks of thine own conscience, against the light of nature; against the patience and long-suffering of God, which should have led thee to repentance.

3. 'Seriously consider the fearful threatenings against sin and sinners,' which are all judgments and plagues here, and eternal death and condemnation hereafter; and apply them to thyself, reasoning thus, 'If the least transgression of the law deserveth the curse of God, yea, all judgments and plagues here, and eternal condemnation hereafter; then how many curses and plagues here? What and how great condemnation have I deserved? who have committed sins innumerable for number, and heinous in their quality.' And, withal, consider the truth and faithfulness of God in making good his threatenings as well as his promises.

4. Beg this great mercy of an humbled heart from God: For it is he who must strike our stony hearts, these hard rocks of ours, before they can yield any water of true repentance.

And, that thy prayers may be the more prevalent, plead that

gracious promise of God, *to take away the stony hearts out of our flesh, and to give us hearts of flesh.* Hath God promised, and is there no hope in the promise? Is there hope, and wilt thou not lay hold on that hope? plead with thy God upon his own word, Is not this thy word, O Lord? Hast not thou said, thou wilt make this stone flesh? wilt not thou do what thou hast said? O perform thy word unto thy servant, wherein thou hast commanded me to put my trust.

And, be importunate in this request of thine unto God, often renewing thy prayers; and never give over till thou find thine hard heart brought into a mourning and melting frame. Though God, for a while, seemeth deaf to thy prayers, yet be not thou dumb, many petitions he cannot deny.

IV. 'Resolve to give a present bill of divorce to all thy sinful lusts and pleasures, utterly to renounce and forsake thine old sinful course of life, and to set upon a new course, to serve God in holiness and righteousness all the remaining part of thy life. It is in vain for thee to lament and bewail thy past sins, if thou wilt not give over thy sinning trade. For as the apostle adviseth, thou must first *put off the old man with his corrupt lusts, before thou put on the new man.* Thou therefore who hast accustomed thyself to swearing and cursing, to whoring and drinking, to scoffing and railing against the people of God, resolve to swear and curse no more, to whore and drink no more, to scoff and rail no more, but to cast them away with detestation, avoiding the places and occasions of these sins. For it is a vain thing to think thyself strong enough to abstain from any sin, when thou canst not withdraw thyself from the occasion thereof.

Ah, sinner, if thou hast any regard to thy precious soul, it will be thy wisdom speedily to resolve to leave thine old course of life, and to turn over a new leaf. Think not of peace with God, whilst thou art at peace with sin. Think not that thy old scores are crossed, whilst thou art so freely scoring up anew. Deceive not thyself; thy divorce from sin, and thy marriage with Christ must be both on the same day. And count not thyself divorced, till thou and thy sins be parted. Resolve this day, to have done with thy old ways for ever. There is no true humiliation for sin, where there is not a resolution against it. Say not, thou art not humbled enough, how little soever thy sorrow be, if thou art sincerely resolved against iniquity. And say not thou, art humble enough, how deep soever it hath been, if there follow not this resolution. Resolve for Christ; resolve against the devil and all his works. And, that thy resolutions may hold, observe these following directions.

1. 'Be sure thou do not ground thy resolutions on any confidence in thy own strength, but in the strength of Jesus Christ: without whose assistance thou canst do nothing; but, through

Christ's strengthening thee, thou wilt be enabled to do any thing.' And, know, that the more sensible thou art of thine own weakness, and insufficiency, the more ready Christ is to help thee, and the more strength shalt thou receive from Christ. Which the Apostle Paul found true in his own experience, for, saith he, 2 Cor. xii. 10. *When I am weak, then am I strong;* that is, when I am weak, and insufficient in myself, in mine own apprehension, then I do most of all feel a gracious supply from Christ.

2, 'Back thy resolutions with Prayer.' As thou dost resolve, in the grace and strength of God, to abandon thy lusts, to forsake thy former wicked and ungodly course of life, so, be earnest with God in prayer for power and strength against the power and strength of sin. For, as it is God's power by which alone thou canst keep down the power of thy lusts; so, prayer is the means sanctified for the obtaining thereof. Oh, therefore, pray, and pray earnestly, yea, add fasting to thy prayers! For old sins to which thou hast been long accustomed, are like those devils which possessed the man from his youth, which could not be cast out, without fasting and prayer.

3. 'Second thy prayers with thy diligence and faithful endeavours, striving against thy lusts and corruptions, though never so sweet and dear unto thee.' For, those are vain and insignificant resolutions which promise great matters, but do nothing. Whereas, true resolutions are active and stirring, putting men upon the work. Hast thou resolved, through the grace of God, to abandon thy lusts? up then and be doing; set on it presently, without any further delay.

5. 'Frequently call to mind the resolutions thou hast made of a speedy and thorough reformation, which will be an especial means to keep them fresh in memory; and a fresh remembrance of them will stir thee up to a conscionable performance of them.'

6. 'Often renew thy resolutions.' It is not sufficient, frequently to view thy resolutions, but thou mayest likewise frequently renew them: For, a resolution renewed is as new made, and thereby becometh fresh and vigorous. And truly there is great power in a resolution, when it is fresh upon the heart.

V. Having resolved to give a bill of divorce to thy sinful lusts and pleasures, make choice of Christ for thy Lord and Husband, as well as for thy Priest and Saviour. Take him as the *Bride* doth her *Bridegroom* for better or for worse, for richer and poorer, with his cross as well as with his crown; resign and give up thyself unto Christ, to be ruled and governed, ordered and disposed in all things by him; and resolve, as to cast thyself at the feet of Christ in subjection to him, so to cast thyself into the arms of Christ, and upon his shoulders for salvation from him.

Let the consideration of those many melting invitations of Jesus Christ unto poor sinners to come unto him stir thee up to go unto

him, to cast thyself into the merciful and meritorious arms and embracements of thy crucified Saviour, to throw thyself upon his grace and mercy, as God hath laid thy help upon him; so, do thou lay thy hope upon him, both for the pardon of thy sins past, and for power against sin for the time to come; for grace here, and glory hereafter. And if thou canst bring up thine heart to this, then is the match made between Christ and thy soul; so that thou mayest with confidence say, Christ is mine, and I am his.

And oh what a joyful day will this be unto thee! In this consisteth thy new-birth, and work of regeneration, whereby thou art become a new creature. This day, is salvation come into thy heart: All other things are but preparatives unto this.

Oh therefore let me prevail with thee, above all things to make this choice of Christ for thy Lord and Saviour; to resign up thyself unto him and his laws, as well as to expect salvation from him. For, no man can take Jesus Christ savingly, who takes him not wholly as his *Lord* and *Husband*, to serve and obey him; as well as his *Priest* and *Saviour*, to free him from the guilt and punishment of all his sins. *He is the author of eternal salvation only to those who obey him.*

Ah sinner, whosoever thou art, how many soever thy sins are; this day, in the name of the great God, I do tender Jesus Christ unto thee. And, as thou tenderest the life and happiness of thine own soul, refuse him not; but stir up thyself to accept of him, both in his person, and in all his offices. Say, the Lord Jesus Christ shall be my *Prophet*, I will in all things, labour to be taught and instructed by him. And he shall be my *King*, I will give him the supremacy, I will resign up myself wholly to his dominion, in all things to be ordered and governed by him. And he shall be my *Priest*, he shall answer to God, and make an atonement for me; I will rest upon his perfect righteousness, and all-sufficient sacrifice, offered upon the cross for life and salvation.

Though thou hast hitherto been a great sinner, yet, if now thou wilt abandon thy sins, and this embrace Jesus Christ; thou shalt have him given to thee, and all thy sins freely forgiven thee. Oh why wilt thou neglect so great salvation: O do not defer the doing of it one day longer! But to-day, even now, that Christ is freely offered unto thee, resolve to receive him.

VI. Engage thyself, by an express and solemn covenant unto God, to abandon thy former sins, and sinful course of life; and to serve him in holiness and newness of life, all the remaining part of thy days.

There is a two-fold covenanting with God.

1. One is chiefly in and with the heart, which consisteth in a sincere closing with God in Christ, and surrendering up ourselves unto him. to be his faithful servants.

2. The other is expressed by the tongue and writing, when a

man, by words of writing, doth express his covenant with God, engaging himself, as to give a bill of divorce to his former lusts; so, to give up himself to God in Christ, to live in an holy conformity to his will.

Now it is this latter way of express and solemn covenanting, that I would commend unto you.

God in the covenant he makes with us, promiseth expressly to be our God and to take us for his people, saying, *I will be your God, and you shall be my people.* Must it not then needs be our duty, to make an express covenant with God, promising to take him for our God, and to engage ourselves to be his faithful people? And certainly, it cannot but be our duty to do that by ourselves at age, which we did by our parents at baptism: For, though then we were entered into the covenant of God by our *parents*, yet their consent and dedication will serve our turn no longer, than till we come to age, and natural capacity to consent and covenant for ourselves. So that, our first baptismal dedication, without our own actual consent, and personal dedication of ourselves to God in Christ, will avail us little. I grant indeed, that this explicit engaging ourselves to God in express words or writing, is not absolutely necessary to salvation. For, if any person close entirely and sincerely with God, his state is thereby safe, although he doth not thus express himself. But yet, this express and personal covenanting with God before-mentioned, may be of singular use to a Christian to mind him of, and quicken him to duty, and establish him in the ways of God, and cause him to be more watchful, and strengthen him against temptation, and by all, to raise to himself a foundation of true and solid peace and comfort.

For your better direction therein, I shall briefly shew you:

I. 'What is to be done before you make this covenant.'

II. 'How it ought to be performed.'

III. 'What duties are required of you after the performance of it.'

I. For the first, What is to be done before you make this covenant. 'Study well the terms and conditions of your covenant;' examine your own hearts, whether you find a willingness in yourselves, to renounce and forsake your former sins, and sinful course of life, and to set upon a new course, to turn over a new leaf, to be more conscionable in the discharge of the duties of your places, callings, and relations. Search yourselves, whether you are willing to receive Christ in all his offices, not only as your *Priest*, to be saved by him, but likewise as your *Prophet*, to be taught and instructed by him; yea, as your *Lord* and *King*, to be ruled and governed by him. Whether you can lay yourselves at the feet of Christ; and be content to run all hazards with him, to take up your cross, and deny your dearest lust; and whatsoever stands in competition with him.

II. For the manner, 'How this duty ought to be performed.'

1. 'Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would prepare your heart for such a solemn business, by giving you suitable affections thereunto; and that he would graciously accept both your person and your service: and, by his holy Spirit, strengthen and assist you in the performance thereof.

2. 'You must covenant absolutely, without any secret exception or reservation.' Too, too many Christians herein exceedingly deceive their own souls; they will promise to abandon the service of the devil, the world, and the flesh; and to resign up themselves to God and his service; but, it must be with this *proviso*, that they may be indulged in such a beloved lust, or to live in the practice of such a profitable sin, saying with Naaman, *Therein the Lord be merciful unto thy servant;* whereby they plainly discover the hypocrisy of their hearts.

3. 'It must be done with sincerity and uprightness of heart.' That which the beloved disciple John saith of *love*, 1 John iii. 18. *Let us not love in word only, and in tongue, but in deed, and in truth:* the same may I say concerning this present work, 'Let us not covenant in words only with our tongue, but, as in deed, so, in *truth;* that is, sincerely from the heart, lest otherwise we take the name of God in vain. If a man ought to be cordial in any thing, surely then in this solemn transaction with God, who is the searcher of all hearts, and knows not only the thoughts and imaginations of our hearts, but also the ends and aims, the intentions and purposes of our hearts, in all our actions.

4. 'Make thy covenant under the condition of God's help and assistance, it being He only, who makes us able, as to will, so to do, of his good pleasure, Phil. ii. 13.' And therefore, make thy covenant with confidence on the assistance of God's Spirit, to enable thee to keep it, suspecting thine own weakness. Peter's purpose was, questionless, sincere, and his resolution good; but, self-confidence was his fault: he presumed too much upon his own strength, which, that he might the better discern, he was left to himself. Vow, therefore, and covenant in the name of God, and thou wilt find ability to perform it.

5. 'Write the covenant with thine own hand, and then read it over and over again, that thou mayest thoroughly understand the matter, and terms thereof, and thereupon leave thine unfeigned assent and consent thereunto.'

6. Set upon the work with all possible seriousness, as being a business of the greatest importance, upon which thine eternal life and salvation dependeth; and therefore set thyself as in the presence of God, call up the most earnest of thy thoughts, rouse up all the powers of thy soul, and command them to the work: and then, upon thy knees make thy covenant with God, in these, or the like words.

BLESSED God! thou art the only true, and living God, who hast made all things, and man in a more special manner for thyself: and when, by his wilful transgressing thy covenant, he had thrown himself into a state of sin and misery, wherein no eye pitied him, then wast thou pleased to compassionate his case, and again to redeem him to thyself, by the precious blood of thine only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. I am therefore thine, O God, by more than a single title: thine, both as made, and redeemed by thee: and therefore, ought to have given up myself entirely, to have loved and served thee, with all my heart, and with all my soul, and with all my strength. But, wretch that I am! I have willingly suffered other lords to have dominion over me. How hath this present evil world, and the things here below, taken up and possessed my soul! How have the lusts of the flesh, and the interest of this carnal life commanded all mine affections! and how hath Satan taken me captive at his will! I have not resisted, but oft complied with his temptations.

But now, Lord being, by thy good Spirit, convinced of the evil and folly of my ways, I desire seriously, and from my heart, to acquit and abandon all these strange lords, to whom I have hitherto yielded myself in subjection; and return to thee, O Lord, as the only fountain of being and happiness. And as I am already thine, by all manner of right and title; so, also now to become entirely thine, by my own actual choice, and consecration of myself unto thee.

I do therefore now here in thy presence, solemnly, and in the simplicity of my soul, renounce this vain and wicked world, with all the lusts, and carnal interests of the flesh; the devil and all his works which Jesus Christ came to destroy. And wholly, and without reserve, I give up and dedicate myself unto thee, O God, Father, Son, and Spirit, in whose name I have been baptized. Thou, Lord, art my Creator; and I here engage myself, to own thee as my only sovereign, to live in all subjection to thee; and to be entirely at thy disposal, and to take thee for my only God and portion.

I do here also accept of thy Son Jesus Christ, as my only mediator, by whom I am to be saved. I now receive him in all his offices, and for all those ends and purposes, for which the Father hath appointed him: not only as a *Priest*, to satisfy and intercede for the remission of my sins; but as the *Shepherd* and *Bishop* of souls; the great *Prophet*, whom I am to hear in all things that he shall say unto me; and, as my *Lord* and *King*, to submit to his laws and government, that he alone may rule in my heart, and subdue my lusts; and fulfil in me all the good purposes of his will.

And to thee, holy Spirit, I here resign myself; and to thy only conduct, to sanctify, guide, and comfort me; not willingly any more to quench or resist any of thy sacred motions.

To all this, I do here in thy presence, O God, (who searchest the heart; and knowest what is in man) willingly subscribe my name, as a witness against myself, if ever I prove false in my covenant; humbly begging the aid and assistance of thy grace, that I may be stedfast and faithful therein, conscientiously doing, and performing it unto the end.

Lord! search me, and try my heart, and if there be any false way in me, discover it to me, that I may not be condemned with the hypocrites; but be upright, and without guile; and in the great day may be found blameless, and unreproveable in thy sight. *Amen, Amen.*

III. The duties required of us after our solemn covenanting with God, are briefly these;

1. Having thus in truth and sincerity, with all possible reverence and seriousness, made thy covenant with God, set thy hand thereunto; and then lay it up safe amongst thy choicest things, that it may be a standing memorial of thy solemn engagement unto God, often looking thereunto.

2. 'Make conscience of performing thy covenant.' Having engaged thyself to renounce and abandon thy former lusts, and sinful courses, stand not dallying with them, but speedily reject them with detestation. If wicked companions have had too much of thy converse and intimacy; now break off society with them. If thou hast lived in the omission of any known duty, as, of secret and family prayer, of reading the scriptures, or the like; now, set upon the practice of them, and be sure thou perform them in a serious and spiritual manner, serving God in spirit and truth. Hereby wilt thou have a comfortable evidence, that thou hast in truth renounced the devil, the world, and the sinful desires of the flesh; and hast devoted and given up thyself to be the Lord's, in sincerity. For, then is the resignation of ourselves unto God done in truth, when it doth engage us presently to the performance, of what we have vowed and covenanted.

3. 'Oft call to mind thy solemn covenant made to *God*, especially when thou art present at other's baptism, and at the sacrament of the Lord's supper;' frequent meditation thereof, is a special means to keep it fresh in memory: and a fresh remembrance of it, will put life into thy conscience, and stir thee up to a conscionable performance thereof.

4. When thou art tempted to any sin, bring that sin to the touchstone of thy covenant, and search whether it be not against it. This will be a special means to make thee oft to think of thy covenant, and to be more careful in keeping *it*, and in resisting *temptations* against *it*.

CHAP. XIII.

Other Means on our part to be performed for attaining of Regeneration.

VI. WITH patience to wait upon Christ, in the use of his ordinances, especially the word and prayer.

1. 'Frequent the ministry of the word, where the Spirit of God useth to breathe.' The Spirit is the principal worker of this great work, as our Saviour expresseth, John iii. 5, 6. And the ministry of the word, is the ordinary means and instrument, which the Spirit of God useth for the effecting hereof. The Spirit of God breathes not in an ale-house, or in a tavern, or play-house; but in the ministry of the word. Whereupon, the Apostle Paul calls it, Phil. ii. 16. *The word of life*, by which our souls are quickened: and, the Apostle Peter, *the seed of regeneration, by which we are new born*, 1 Pet. i. 23. Attend therefore unto the ministry of the word, as the ordinance of God, upon which his blessing is promised; use it in obedience to his command, in hope of his blessing, and with desire to profit thereby.

And, for thine encouragement, know, 'That as dead a soul as thine, hath been quickened by the Spirit of God, as it hath been attending upon the ministry of the word: as hard an heart as thine hath been softened: as profane an heart hath been sanctified: as carnal and corrupt an heart hath been changed and renewed.' And who knoweth, but, while thou art attending upon God in his way, his Spirit may breathe upon thee; and so quicken thy dead heart, mollify thine hard heart, sanctify thy profane heart; yea, renew and change thy totally-corrupted, and carnal heart, wherein consisteth the work of regeneration.

And when thou hearest, attend to it, as to a message sent from God, concerning thine everlasting salvation. And be often calling it to remembrance, *whereby* it will take the deeper impression upon thine heart. And though, for the present, thou find not the benefit thou expectest, yet, wait still upon the ordinance. The *lame man*, who lay long at the pool of Bethesda, at last was cured.

2. 'Be much in reading the word of God, and such practical books as may help thee in understanding, and applying it.' This must not thrust out preaching; yet, it is an excellent means of grace in its own time and place, as very many have found by their own experience. For, as the Psalmist speaketh, *The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul*, Psalm xix. 7.

Luther confesseth of himself, 'that he was changed and renewed, upon the reading the scriptures: and therefore professed, he would not part with one leaf of the Bible, for all the world.' For, in the scriptures, there is a clear revelation of the way and means

of salvation by Jesus Christ; therein is contained the covenant of grace, and the laws of heaven, according to which, we must square all our actions.

3. 'Pray unto God for the change of thine heart,' beg of him, that he would be pleased, by his Spirit, to regenerate thee, to plant his image in thy soul, that thou mayest become a new creature. What the Apostle James saith of wisdom, James v. 1. is true of all grace, *If any one lack it, let him ask it of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.*

Oh! therefore beseech him to open thine eyes, and shew thee how sad and deplorable thy condition is, so long as thou continuest in the state of unregeneracy, that thou mayest be truly sensible thereof; that he would shew thee the excellency and necessity of a new birth, that thine heart may be raised up in some earnest longing desires after the same: that he would vouchsafe unto thee his *holy Spirit*, which may quicken thy dead soul, and renew it after the *image of God*, in righteousness and true holiness. And, in thy prayers, plead the promise of God, *to give his Spirit to those who ask him.* That thy prayer for a new birth may the better speed.

1. 'Be earnest therein.' Pray with all thine heart, and with all thy might, with the highest intention of affection. If thou wouldst be a prevailing *Israel*, thou must be a wrestling *Jacob;* wrestle with God in prayer, for it is the fervent prayer only, that is effectual.

2. 'Be uncessant in thy prayers, as one that will take no nay, nor give over, till thou find the work wrought in thy soul.' Be as importunate with God, as the widow was with the unjust judge. For God loveth importunity.

Obj. But some are apt to object and say, How can I pray without the Spirit?

A. Put thyself upon the duty of prayer, and who *knoweth*, but thou mayest soon feel and find the *assistance* of *God's Spirit* in the performance, *though thou findest* it not in the entrance of thy duty. 'Go therefore unto God in prayer, spread before him thy wretched, miserable state and condition, plead thy miserable necessity, the dreadfulness of thy present state, how much better it had been, that thou hadst never been born, than not to be born again.' And then waiting for the assistance of the Spirit; be earnest and importunate with God, that he would not let thee live a day longer in thine unregenerate state, lest death should find thee therein, and then thou perish everlastingly.

Obj. Some I know, do question, whether carnal or unregenerate men, may be put upon that duty of prayer, because the scripture saith, Prov. xv. 8. that the *Sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination to the Lord;* and, that *God heareth not sinners.*

A. 1. 'The scripture gives us warrant to press carnal and unregenerate men upon the duty of prayer.' For, at the time when

Peter told Simon Magus, *That he was in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity ;* then he pressed him to pray unto God, saying, *Repent of this thy wickedness, and pray unto God, if perhaps the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee*, Acts viii. 22.

2. 'We do not exhort men to pray, and still hold themselves resolved to continue in their wicked and ungodly courses ; such prayer indeed would be an abomination :' but, to resolve upon turning, and so, to go to the Lord, for his grace to assist, and accept them. And therefore, saith Peter to Simon Magus, *Repent of this thy wickedness, and so, pray for pardon.*

And, in thine own prayers, call in the help of other men's prayers ; beg of them, that in their prayers they would be mindful of thee, and of thy condition ; that they would be earnest with God on thy behalf, that he would make thee a new creature, by endowing thee with true, saving, sanctifying graces. The *jailor's* conversion is set down as the consequent of the Apostle's prayers. Not only their deliverance out of *his prison*, but his *deliverance* out of the *devil's prison*, is set down as a fruit of their prayers. To thine own prayers therefore, call in the help of other men's prayers.

VII. 'When either in hearing, reading, praying, or at any other time, thou feelest any motions of God's Spirit in thy soul, and conscience, make much of them, *surrender* up thyself thereunto ; presently turn those *motions* into resolutions ; and those resolutions into endeavours.' Let not the motions of God's Spirit, be nipped in the bud, but nourish and cherish them, that they may bring forth good fruit. Are they motions tending to the working in thee, a loathing and abhorring of thy former sinful lusts ? second those motions with strong resolutions, to leave and forsake them for the time to come, at least, so to strive against them, as they may not rule and reign in thee, as formerly they have done. Are they motions tending to the stirring thee up to any good duty omitted ? Oh turn those motions into performances, and presently fall upon the practice of those duties, whether it be praying in thy closet, or in thy family, or such like.

Doth the Spirit of God beam any light from the word into thine understanding ; whereby thou art more thoroughly convinced of thy miserable condition by nature, of the excellency of the new-birth, of the necessity thereof unto salvation ? Labour to improve this light to the stirring up in thee an earnest, longing desire after the work of regeneration. Hath the Spirit of God, in a sermon, so convinced thee of some gross, scandalous sin, or sins, that thou art pricked at the heart, and deeply humbled under the sense and apprehension of them ? Oh content not thyself with some sudden pangs of affection ! but forthwith go into some secret place, and there take the advantage of thy present relenting frame of heart, for the more free and full confessing of thy sins unto God, and engaging thyself by a solemn covenant unto him,

to be more watchful over thyself, as against thy former lewd and wicked courses, so against the occasions leading thereunto.

Ah sinner! it will be thy wisdom carefully to observe, and diligently to improve all the motions and stirrings of God's Spirit in thy soul and conscience, by seconding the work of his holy Spirit in thee. Lose not the wind and tide: the wind may lie, the tide may turn, and where art thou then? 'twill be hard rowing against wind or tide. Thou little thinkest what advantage such motions wisely improved may be to thy soul, and what prejudice the slighting and neglecting of them may be unto thee: for aught thou knowest, thine eternal happiness or misery may depend upon the improving or slighting the same.

VIII. 'Be much in the company of the godly, walk with them who walk with God.' He that walketh with the wise, shall be more wise: He that walketh with the humble, shall be more humble: he that walketh with the holy, shall learn holiness. As there is no greater hindrance to the work of Christ, than the society of the wicked; so there is no greater furtherance to it, than the society of those who fear God: for there is none who will be so ready to pity and compassionate you, to counsel and direct you in the way to heaven, as these: none so ready to provoke and egg you on unto godliness, to encourage and cheer you up when you do well, and to reprove you when you do amiss, as these: none so ready to communicate their experiences to you. 'O come, say they, and we will tell you what the Lord hath done for our souls.' So, that in the company of the godly, there is much good to be got; they being like lanthorns which disperse their light round about.

Oh Christians! encourage poor sinners to come among you; let your discourses be practical sermons; let your ways be living copies of that holy doctrine which you have received; let your conversation be full of love, life, pity, compassion towards them; be ready to teach, counsel, encourage and help them on after the Lord. Teach not sinners to say (by the barrenness, and unsavoriness of your lives) 'there is no more of God to be gotten in the dwellings of the righteous, than in the tents of wickedness.'

Thus have I shewed you the means on your part to be performed for the furthering the new-birth, and the work of regeneration in your souls. And now give me leave to propound one question to you: 'Are you resolved with the grace and assistance of God, speedily to put yourselves upon the practice of these directions, or no?' If you think these things more than necessary, and are ready to say, What need so much ado? as if without so much hearing, so much reading, so much praying, and the like, there were no hope of regeneration, and salvation! you may, then sit down and take your ease. But, know for certain, that, without a conscionable use of these means, you are like to fall short, as

of regeneration here, so of salvation hereafter. For, where God hath appointed means, he doth not ordinarily work without them; and therefore, if you will not use *God's means*, no wonder if you go without *his grace*.

I beseech you for the sake of your precious souls, do not wilfully refuse to be happy, do not wittingly plunge your souls, into everlasting miseries. Be willing to be happy, awaken your sleepy, stir up your lazy hearts to be doing. Heaven is not gotten with a wish, everlasting glory is worthy your utmost pains, and will not be gotten without it.

What say you after all that hath been said? Are you willing to be converted? to become new men, and to take up a new course? If you are not yet, when will you? Are you content to die in your present state? If you were now breathing out your last, and just passing into another world, would you not wish you had hearkened to counsel? Though thou wilt live the life, yet art thou content to die the death of the obstinate and hardened? Be not brutes and madmen. If Christ be best at death; if holiness will be best at last; if you know and believe that when you come to die, you shall wish you had made Christ sure: then sure your standing out against Christ now, your refusing grace now, is the first-born of follies. O be wise! consider what is before you; Christ and the world, holiness and sin, life and death, choose now for yourselves; and if you will be advised, let your this day's choice be the same, which you are resolved shall be your dying choice. If you would not choose to die in your sins, to die drunkards, to die adulterers, to die scoffers, to die unbelievers, live not out this day in such a dreadful state.

CHAP. XIV.

Several Objections of carnal and unregenerate Men against the use of the forementioned means, answered.

HAVING shewed the means, I come now to answer the objections, which many carnal men pretend against the use of them, in order to a new-birth.

Obj. 1. Some are ready to object and say, 'These are indeed likely means, but they find neither strength, nor ability, to set upon the practice of men.'

A. 1. I would ask thee, Whether thou canst in truth say thou hast not been wanting to thyself in such things as were within thy power and strength? Hast thou not as much power to go into the house of God, as into an ale-house? to read the holy Scriptures, as play-books and pamphlets? to associate thyself with the godly,

as with the wicked and profane? Canst not thou take up a resolution, to abandon thine old sinful lusts, and to set upon a new course of life? Certainly if thou hast been wanting to thyself in these and such like things, this objection, taken from thine own inability, is but an idle excuse, and argues rather thine unwillingness, than inability; and know, that, in the last and great day, thou wilt be damned, not so much for thy want of power, as for thy want of will.

2. If thou wilt but put thyself upon the use of means, thou dost not know what strength thou mayest receive from God, and what may be the issue thereof. *While Peter was preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word*, Acts x. 44. And for ought thou knowest, whilst thou art attending upon the *Ministry* of the *Word*, or praying unto God, the Holy Ghost may fall on thee, and make that ordinance effectual for thy regeneration and salvation. And there put thyself upon the use of means; wait at the pool; thou knowest not how soon the Spirit may come and move upon thy soul. For God doth usually meet with those who seek him.

Obj. 2. 'I fear I am not elected, and therefore conceive it altogether fruitless for me to labour in the use of any means for this new-birth. Oh! could I be assured of my election, then should I with comfort and confidence labour after it.'

A. 1. Election is a secret thing, and belongeth unto God; according to that of Moses, *Secret things belong unto the Lord our God, but things which are revealed belong unto us*, Deut. xxix. 29. and therefore trouble not thyself with God's secret will, but follow his revealed will. Apply thyself seriously and cordially to the use of the means God hath sanctified for thy regeneration; and from thence thou mayest gain some comfortable evidence of thine election.

2. Consider, though it be the duty of every Christian to give all diligence to make his calling and election sure; yet, no man can know, and be assured of his election, till he be regenerated by the Spirit of God; therefore, the not knowing thine election should be so far from keeping thee off from applying thyself to the means of regeneration, as it should rather be an argument to press thee thereunto: for by thy regeneration thou mayest know thine election. The eternal decrees of God are only made known *a posteriori*, from their effects, one whereof is regeneration: find this, and thou needest not doubt of thine election.

3. Wilt thou not plough nor sow, because thou knowest not whether God hath determined thee an harvest? Thou wilt say, I am sure I shall not reap, if I sow not; there is hope of a harvest, if there be a seed-time: and therefore I will adventure to sow whatever the issue may be. And wilt thou not be as wise for thy

soul, as for thy body? Because thou art not sure of thine election, wilt thou make thy damnation sure?

Obj. 3. 'Ah! I am too unworthy to partake of so great a mercy: there is nothing in me to move God to work grace in me, and therefore why should I trouble myself about it?'

A. 1. 'Consider God's grace is every way so free that the mercy which he vouchsafeth to any of his creatures, is altogether of himself, and from himself.' He respecteth his own goodness, not our unworthiness, in the mercies which he conferreth: if none shall obtain grace but the worthy, who then can be saved?

2. Consider, that no man before his regeneration could ever find any worthiness in himself why he should partake of that mercy. What was there in Manasseh? or Zaccheus? or in Mary Magdalene? or in Paul, before their conversion? Surely none at all. Nay, there is never a child of God or earth; or in heaven, but had as much unworthiness before his regeneration, as thou now hast. Why then doth the sight and apprehension of thine unworthiness put thee out of all hope of obtaining the same?

3. 'Consider, that the sense of thine unworthiness is some degree of worthiness; yea, it is the greatest worthiness thou canst attain unto.' And none ever found greater mercy from God, than they who have been most sensible of their unworthiness. Instance the *woman of Canaan*, who acknowledged herself to be no better than a *dog*, yet received this answer from Christ, *Oh woman! great is thy faith, be it unto thee, even as thou wilt*, Mat. xv. 27. So likewise the *Publican*, who was conscious to himself of so much unworthiness, that he stood afar off, and durst not lift up his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, *God be merciful unto me a sinner;* yet, as the text noteth, Luke xviii. 13; *He went away justified rather than the Pharisee*, who was puffed up with a conceit of his own righteousness.

Obj. 4. Some object the number and the heinousness of their sins. Oh they are such vile and wretched sinners, that they cannot expect so great a mercy from God; as, of a son of *Belial* to be made a son of *God*, by the work of regeneration!

A. 1. 'Know, for thy comfort, that God hath embraced, with the arms of his free grace, as great and heinous sinners as thyself.' For, hast thou been an *idolater*, or *murderer?* so was Manasseh: yet was he received to mercy. Hast thou been a *blasphemer*, or a *persecuter* of the saints and servants of God? so was Paul; and yet he obtained mercy. Hast thou been a filthy unclean person, wallowing and delighting, like a sow, in the filth of sin, and mire of sinful filthiness? So did Mary Magdalene, and many of the Corinthians: yet were they washed with the *blood of Jesus Christ, justified and sanctified*, 1 Cor. vi. 11. Hast thou been an *oppressor*, an *extortioner*, who hast got thine estate by over-reaching thy neighbors, and grinding the faces of the poor? So did Matthew

and Zaccheus; who yet found mercy. Why, then, is there not hope of mercy for thee? when grace hath embraced such great and heinous sinners.

Q. Wilt thou say, Thou art a greater sinner than any of these forementioned.

A. 'This is scarce credible.' But, suppose thy sins do exceed the proportion of any one thou canst find pardoned in scripture; yet this were no just ground of despair: because the depth of God's mercy was never yet fathomed. God never acted his mercy so far, but he is able to act it further: Greater sinners than never yet were pardoned, may be pardoned: And, therefore tho' thy sins were more and greater than the sins of others, yet there is hope of mercy for thee; unless, by thine infidelity, thou dost exclude thyself from the same.

Obj. 5. Others object, They fear their time and day of grace is past and gone, having long stood out, and rejected many offers of grace, and that it is now too late to seek after the grace of God.

A. To this I answer, 'that the slighting and rejecting the many offers of grace, is very sad, yea, an heinous sin, which calls for the deepest sorrow and humiliation.' This made our Saviour to weep over Jerusalem, because they neglected the day of their visitation. But yet know,

1. Christ hath several seasons of conversion, and regeneration; all come not in at the first hour of the day, nor at the sixth hour; Christ brings home some to himself in the latter end of their lives, who have all the former part slighted and rejected his gracious invitations.

2. If thou art heartily sorry for thy former refusals, and dost now unfeignedly desire to close with Christ, I may, with confidence, say, Thy day of grace is not past: For, those affections wrought in thee by the Spirit of God are gracious hints that he intends thee good, if yet thou wilt accept.

3. Thou who fearest thy day of grace is past, know this, That if thou now findest in thyself a willingness to abandon thy former lusts and corruptions, and to become a new creature, to cast off the devil's service, and to become the servant of the Lord Jesus, thy day of grace is not past.

I speak not these things to encourage any to defer, and put off their turning from their sins to a farther day, upon a presumption they shall have mercy at last; beware of that madness. Thou that wilt not to-day, thy soul may be in hell before to-morrow. But I speak this to encourage old sinners to a speedy turning. Old sinner, it is the last time with thee, for aught thou knowest, thou art just come to thy *now* or *never*. And two things I would speak to thee.

1. It is a great doubt, whether thou, who hast stood it out so

long, wilt come in now: fear and tremble; few, very few of those that stand it out to the last hour, do come in at the last hour: yet,

2. If thou wilt, thou mayest: if in this thy day, thy *last* day, thou wilt come in, thou shalt be saved.

Obj. 6. If once I be regenerate, and become a new creature, I shall never live one merry day more: then farewel all delights and pleasures! for, the life of a godly man is full of uncomfortableness, and sadness.

A. 1. True it is, every regenerate man ought to renounce all sinful delights; to bid adieu to all unlawful pleasures; which, in truth, is no bondage; but, rather a spiritual liberty: The bondage of a Christian is, 'in being a servant to his sinful lusts;' and, his liberty, 'in being delivered from them.' The apostle bewails the time when himself, and other saints *were foolish, serving divers lusts and pleasures*, Tit. iii. 3; and reckons it amongst the prime benefits they received by the grace of the gospel, To be delivered from that slavery and bondage.

2. Though every regenerate man ought to renounce all sinful pleasures and delights; yet he may in some measure, enjoy any lawful pleasures, which the creature affords.

3. The work of regeneration is so far from depriving a man of all delights and pleasures, that, there are unspeakable delights peculiar to the regenerate: They have dainties which their Spirits feed upon, that the world knows not of; *A stranger doth not intermeddle with their joy*, Prov. xiv. 1. As they have higher and more noble principles than other men; so, they feed upon higher and more noble comforts: Their comforts are spiritual; administered unto their souls by a special work of the Holy Ghost, who is designed by the *Father* and the *Son* to be the *Comforter*, to cheer and revive the spirits of his servants. And, certainly, the comforts and delights which he conveys into the souls of the regenerate, must needs be soul-satisfying and soul-ravishing consolations. What blasphemy it is, to affirm, That the joys of the world are better than the joys of God!

Ah sinners! what folly, then, hath bewitched you, to think it greater pleasure to live in foolish sports, and fleshly delights, than in the sense of God's love, and in the believing thoughts of glory! did you but know the peace, and the comforts, the pleasure and the joy which springeth from the apprehension of God's love, and walking in the ways of holiness, you would soon be of another mind, and take another course than you do.

The new-birth is the very beginning of a life of peace and comfort; and, the greatest pleasantness is to be found in the ways of holiness. Solomon, who had experience of all other pleasures, yet saith of the ways of godliness, Prov. iii. 17. *Her ways are ways of pleasantness;* even soul-satisfying pleasantness.

Obj. But some are ready to object and say: How can the state

of the regenerate be so comfortable and joyful, whenas none are more afflicted and persecuted than they; *In the world*, saith our Saviour, speaking to his disciples, John xvi. 32. *ye shall have tribulation:* and, saith the apostle, *All that will live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution;* which made Luther to say, *A Christian is a cross-bearer: Qui non est Crucianus, non est Christianus;* Luther in Gen. xxix.

A. 1. True it is; none are more afflicted and persecuted than they; but, their afflictions and persecutions do not always deprive them of true spiritual joy and comfort: For, saith the Apostle, Rom. v. 1, 3. *Being justified by faith, we have peace with God; and we rejoice in tribulation:* And, saith our Saviour, *When men shall revile you, persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake, rejoice, and be exceeding glad*, Mat. v. 11, 12.

2. God's children in and under great afflictions, do oft-times feel and find the greatest joy and comfort. As *their sufferings abound; so, their consolation aboundeth in and through Christ*, 1 Cor. i. 3. When doth a Christian stand in more need of the comforts of God; and when doth he enjoy more of them, than when outward comforts do most fail him? When David was sorely distressed, being plundered of his goods, and robbed of his wives and children, *he encouraged himself in the Lord his God*, and received much comfort from him, 1 Sam. xxix. 6.

CHAP. XV.

The second Branch of the Use of Exhortation unto the Regenerate.

HAVING done with the first branch of the use of exhortation unto the Unregenerate; come we now unto the second, which concerneth the Regenerate; and consisteth of divers heads.

I. 'Admire and adore God's special mercy and goodness in thy regeneration.' Let thine heart be ravished with the consideration of his love to thee in Christ Jesus; the bottom whereof cannot be fathomed by any angel in heaven: And, therefore, well mayest thou cry out; *Oh the heighth, and depth, the length, and the breadth of the love of God unto thy soul!* That the Lord should pluck thee as a brand out of the fire! that he should take thee into his special grace and favour, when he left many millions of men and women to perish in their sins! that he should make thee an heir of heaven, when he left so many to be firebrands of hell? that thy nature should be renewed and sanctified, when others are left in their filth and pollution! Hast thou not unspeakable cause to sit down and admire the freeness of God's grace, and riches of his mercy towards thee? surely nothing but free grace hath put this

honour upon thee, and put such a difference between thee and others: For, what did God see more in thee than in others, to move him to set his special love on thee ?

Oh! cast thine eyes round about thee; look upon thy neighbours, who live under the same ministry, partake of the same ordinances as thou dost, and yet never felt the power and sweetness of them in their souls. Let the abominable wickedness which thou daily seest in others, fill thee with wonder at the loving-kindness of the Lord to thee: That the dew of his grace should fall upon thy soul, when the hearts of so many about thee should be dry, not having one drop of that dew upon them; is not this a mercy to be admired? Oh consider it, and adore it! and say; 'Lord, how is it that thou shouldst bestow thy grace on me, and deny it to so many, who, in many respects, are better than I ?'

That thy heart may be more raised up in admiration of the mercy and goodness of God unto thee herein; take notice of the manifold *privileges* which do follow and accompany such as are regenerated.

1. 'The love and favour of God wherewith they are embraced.' Observe the love of earthly parents to their children, how great, how constant it is; withal, consider, how far God exceeds them in his love, even as far as he doth in greatness, which is *infinitely*. So as every regenerate person may, with assurance, rest on the love of God his Father, which cannot but be most sweet to the soul, and exceeding comfortable: For, in God's fatherly favor consisteth our happiness.

II. 'Union with Christ.' For, Christ is the *Head*, and, by the regeneration, we are his *members*. This union of the regenerate with Christ, is one of the great mysteries of our christian faith: and it is a mystery of an unspeakable comfort and consolation: For, by the virtue of our union with Christ, 'God, is our *Father;* Christ, is our *Brother*, and our *Husband* and *Head;* Heaven, is our *Inheritance;* Angels, are our *Attendants* and *Guardians*, who are sent forth to minister for them, who shall be heirs of salvation.' These angels are those *horses and chariots of fire*, which were round about *Elisha;* and which are also round about every member of Christ in all their dangers, though they see them not. If the eyes of the regenerate were but opened, to see their glorious attendants, how would their hearts be comforted and cheered in all their distresses.

III. 'Adoption.' Such as are regenerated, are thereby the *adopted sons of God*. Oh that the Lord would open our eyes to see this privilege! *Behold*, saith St. John, *what manner of love the Father hath bestowed on us, that we should be called the sons of God!* 1 John iii. 1. The Apostle, not being able to express the greatness of God's love to us therein, breaks forth into an admiration thereof: And, truly, well might he say, *Behold what manner of love the Fa-*

ther hath bestowed on us! For, here, is not only *love*, but *love to admiration;* that we vile, wretched, sinful creatures; who were *Children of wrath as well as others*, Eph. ii. 3.; that We should be thus advanced in and by Christ, as to be accounted not only Servants, which is much; nor only *friends*, which is more; but also *SONS*, and, consequently, HEIRS; and CO-HEIRS with Christ; which is most of all.

IV. 'Christian freedom.' As it is the great unhappiness of the *unregenerate*, that they are in a state of *vassalage*; so, it is the greatest happiness of the *regenerate*, that they are in a state of freedom; being freed,

1. 'From Satan.' Though not from the assaults and temptations of Satan, yet from *the power of Satan:* For, our Saviour Christ, by his death, hath destroyed, 'him that had the power of death, that is, the devil.' He hath now broken the Serpent's head, so that, though he may hiss against us, yet he cannot sting us: though he may assault us, yet he cannot overcome us: and though *he goeth about, like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour:* yet Christ hath him in a chain, and he cannot go one link thereof farther than he pleaseth.

2. From sin.' Though the regenerate are not freed from the *in-being of sin*, which doth and will live in them, so long as they live in the world; yet are they freed from the *guilt of sin*, and from the *power and dominion of sin.*

1. 'From the *guilt of sin;* that is, from the wrath and punishment which is due to sin; so that none of our sins shall be able to condemn us: For, Christ as our Surety, Saviour and Redeemer, did bear all our sins in his body upon the tree, and there offered up his life as an all-sufficient sacrifice, and full satisfaction to God's justice for the same. So that, God, being fully satisfied, by the death of Christ, for our sins, will not, nay, he cannot, in justice, require satisfaction again from us. Well, therefore, might the Apostle make this bold challenge; 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect, seeing Christ hath died, and, by his death, fully satisfied God's justice for their sins?' Rom. viii. 33, 34.

2. 'From the power and dominion of sin,' which cometh to pass, by the Spirit of Christ conveyed to them, whereby their sins are, in some measure, mortified and subdued, so that they do not rule nor reign in them as formerly. In our unregenerate estate, sin had not only *possession of us*, but *dominion over us:* so that we did yield a willing subjection unto the command of sin. But, since we are regenerated by the Spirit of God, we are freed, though not from the *in-being*, yet, from the *dominion of sin;* So that, tho' sin may *tyrannize* over us, yet shall it not reign in us; we shall not yield a free and willing obedience to the command thereof.

This is the great comfort of God's children, that, though sin be not removed, yet it is subdued. Though they often times feel

the workings and stirrings of corruption in them, which make them to have many a sad heart, and wet eye, yet they are freed, thro' Christ, from the *dominion of sin.*

3. 'The regenerate are freed from the law;' not only from the *ceremonial*, and *judicial* law, which were peculiar to the *Jews*, and died with the death of their common-wealth; but likewise from the *moral law*, (which concerns all men, at all times, in all places) yet not as it is a rule of obedience, and christian walking; for so it still remains in force, even to the children of God, even after their regeneration: But,

We are freed from the *curse and condemnation of the law: Christ*, saith the Apostle, Gal. iii. 13; *hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:* So that, although we do not perform it in that exact manner and measure which it requireth, yet our transgressions shall not be imputed to us, to condemnation. The law may condemn the *actions*, but not the *persons* of the regenerate; it hath nothing to do with them; therefore, the Apostle saith, *There is no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus*, Rom. viii. 1.

V. 'Provision of all needful good things, is another privilege of the regenerate,' who have a right to all good things through Christ, and the possession of all things, God seeth good for them. It is observable, that, when God was with *Israel*, in the wilderness, (where nothing was to be had) *they lacked nothing*, Deut. ii. 7. It is naturally ingrafted into all parents to provide for their children; what then can they want who have God for their Father? who, as he is an all-sufficient, so, a most loving Father to his children; whose love far surpasseth the love of natural parents to their children. Art thou a child of God by regeneration? then look up to thy Heavenly Father for a supply of all good things. *For, can they that are evil, know how to give good gifts to their children*, saith our Saviour; *And shall not your heavenly Father give to you the things whereof ye have need? He feedeth the fowls of the air, and the beasts of the field;* and he that is careful to provide for his hawks, and his hounds, Will he suffer his children to beg and starve, who must one day be his heirs? Be not then faithless, but believe; and say not, *What shall we eat? or what shall we drink? wherewithal shall we be clothed? For your Heavenly Father knoweth whereof ye have need, and will relieve you*, Mat. vi. 31, 32.

VI. 'Acceptance of their services, though full of weaknesses, infirmities, and imperfections.' Natural parents are not more ready to accept of the weak services performed by their children, than God is to take in good part the imperfect services of his children. How maimed and broken are our prayers many times! yet, coming from a broken heart, they find acceptance with God. Though he regardeth not the glorious works of hypocrites; yet, he graciously accepteth of the weak services of his children done in since-

rity. When we cannot pray with that affection and fervency as we desire, yet, if we set upon it, with an honest and sincere heart, doing it in obedience to the command of God, with a desire to approve ourselves unto him therein, and grieving for our failings and imperfections, God will overlook our failings, and crown our weak endeavours with acceptance.

VII. 'Protection from things hurtful,' is another privilege of the regenerate. They are here subject to manifold casualties, and contingencies, from which the Lord in mercy protects them, keeping watch and ward for them: Yea, he is said to be *a wall of fire round about his people*, Zech. ii. 5. A *wall* to defend them, and of *fire* to consume those that rise up against them: 'So that they shall not be afraid of evil tidings; for, their hearts are *fixed*, trusting in the Lord.' I deny not, but the children of God may be wronged, oppressed, spoiled of all they have, and unjustly slain; yet, in all these shall they not be hurt; *for God will turn all to their good.* Note what David said of Shimei's cursing him, 2 Sam. xvi. 12.; *The Lord will look on my affliction, and requite good for his cursing this day.* On this ground the Hebrews *took joyfully the spoiling of their goods*, Heb. x. 34.

VIII. 'Support under all afflictions, is another privilege of the regenerate.' For, God is present with them, in all their affliction, supporting their weakness with his might; and manifesting his greatest power in their greatest impotency: Yea, though sometimes he seems to leave them in their distress; yet, he giveth such sufficient strength, as they are thereby enabled to bear it, and well to pass it through. This is evident by the Apostle's holy triumph in this case, 2 Cor. iv. 8, 9.; *We are perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed.* The ground hereof is the assistance which God affordeth us, and the strength which he communicateth to us.

IX. 'All things shall work together for the good of the regenerate.' *And God will do them good by all in the latter end*, Deut. viii. 16. He will turn their losses into gain, their crosses into comforts, their sorrows into joy, their cursings into blessings. Those afflictive providences which seem to be most prejudicial unto them, will, in the issue, prove most beneficial: As we see in Joseph, 'The evil which his brethren intended against him, turned to his good.' Their selling him as a slave to the *Ishmaelites*, proved the means of his advancement. To know, that nothing shall hurt a child of God, is ground of exceeding great comfort and consolation: but, to be assured, that 'all things, even all cross providences, shall work together for his good,' is enough to fill the heart with joy. Oh, then, how great is the happiness of every regenerate person! who may be assured, that whatsoever befalleth him, shall be for his good, and doth work together for the best: cer-

tainly, he may truly say, 'Soul, take thy spiritual ease, for here is much spiritual good treasured up for thee.'

X. 'A blessed death.' For, so saith the Spirit, Rev. xiv. 13.; *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord;* that is, in the faith of Christ: who are blessed, both because then 'they rest from their labours;' from all their toil and pains, from all their griefs and sorrow; as also, because 'their works do follow them,' through free-grace in glorious rewards.

The souls of the regenerate, so soon as they are, by death, separated from the body, go immediately into heaven; as is clear from the speech of our Saviour, to the converted thief on the cross, Luke xxiii. 43.; *This day shalt thou be with me in paradise;* which place the Apostle expoundeth to be the *Third Heaven.* The word in the original *Semeron*, translated, *this day*, implies, that immediately after the breathing of his soul out of his body, his soul should go to heaven. And, thus it is with all the regenerate, unto whom death is like the *Red Sea*, to the *Israelites*, even a passage, and thorough-fair into the heavenly *Canaan.*

XI. 'An happy resurrection.' For, at the sound of the last trumpet, all the regenerate shall arise out of their graves, like so many *Josephs* out of prison. Whatsoever imperfections were before in their bodies (as blindness, lameness, crookedness) shall then be done away: Though the body was *sown in corruption*, yet, it shall be raised *in incorruption;* not to be subject to any manner of aches, pains, diseases, or imperfections; Though it were *sown in weakness*, it shall be raised in power: And though it was *sown in dishonour, it shall be raised in glory*, 1 Cor. xv. 42. Here it is many times deformed, but then all deformities and defects shall be removed, and the body made more glorious, through the admirable beauty thereof. Certainly, if the beauty of all the men and women in the world, were concentred in one, it would be far short of the beauty of the saints in heaven, whose bodies shall shine more gloriously than the sun in the firmament.

XII. The last and highest privilege of the regenerate is, 'that they shall have an heavenly inheritance.' Fathers, on earth, use to provide inheritances for their children: and the Apostle Peter 'blesseth God, who hath begotten us to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven,' 1 Pet. i. There shall be a blessed communion of all the saints together; who shall enjoy the society of angels, and fellowship with Christ himself; whose surpassing excellency they shall clearly behold, and partake of that glory wherewith he is arrayed. What tongue can express? what heart can conceive the excellency thereof?

Thus have I shewed you some of the glorious privileges of the regenerate. Oh happy day, may that man or woman say, as long as they live, when God, by his Spirit, regenerated them, and made them new creatures.

CHAP. XVI.

An Exhortation to bless God, for the work of Regeneration, and to walk worthy thereof.

II. A SECOND branch of the use of exhortation unto the regenerate is, 'To be thankful unto God for his great mercy.' Admire the grace of God, and bless his name for ever. Art thou made alive? Is the life of God begotten in thee? And, hast thou evidence of it? O bless God whilst thou hast any being! Let thine heart, and mouth, and life, be filled with his praises: take up the Psalmist's words, Psalm ciii. 1, 2. 'Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless his holy name: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits.' Wilt thou be thankful unto God for thy *natural birth*? And wilt thou not be thankful to him for thy *spiritual birth?* Wilt thou bless him for that he hath made thee a *reasonable creature?* And wilt thou not bless him for making thee a *new creature?* Is not regeneration, of all mercies, the most necessary? And wilt thou not be thankful, for that which is the *one thing necessary?* If the children of Israel praised God for their deliverance from the Egyptian bondage, how much more cause hast thou to praise and magnify the name of God, for thy deliverance from a greater than Egyptian bondage? it being a deliverance from Satan, the worst of all tyrants; from hell, of all places the most loathsome: yea, from *sin*, *death*, and the *curse of the law*.

The more to stir up thyself to this duty of thanksgiving for this mercy,

1. 'Consider the speciality of God's love and goodness unto thee therein, in singling thee out from the multitudes that perish, and setting thee apart for life.' Hath he dealt by all as he hath dealt by thee? O how many millions of men and women hath he suffered to live and die in their sins, when thy soul liveth! How many, for birth, more noble; for policy, more wise; for riches, more wealthy, are let run in their sins, till they fall into wrath, when thou art escaped! when thou considerest that he should pass by them, and set his special love upon thee; if this do not fill thee with love, and with praises, the very stones may cry out against thee. The Psalmist speaketh of it as a great mercy to a godly man, that in a time of plague and pestilence, 'a thousand should fall on his right hand, and on his left, and yet it should not come nigh him.' But what is that to this mercy, that many thousands should fall into hell on thy right hand, and on thy left, and yet thou preserved?

2. 'Consider how sad thy condition was before thy regeneration,' being a child of wrath, a bond-slave, of Satan, and an heir

to hell. And, then, compare it with thy present state; behold! of a *child of wrath*, thou art made a *son of God;* of a *slave of Satan*, thou art become *Christ's freeman;* of an *heir of hell and damnation*, an *heir to heaven and salvation.* And doth not this call for thankfulness?

3. 'Consider, that this mercy is unspeakably greater than all other mercies in the world.' This new-birth makes a man an *honourable person*, one of the royal seed, a king and priest to God: This makes him a *rich man*, the least degree of this grace is better than all the wealth in the world: This is the true riches, the durable riches, a treasure that faileth not, nor can it be valued. This makes him a *joyful man:* There's joy in heaven at thy conversion, and a foundation of everlasting joy laid in thine own soul: Thou mayest rejoice, it is meet that thou make merry; for, 'this thy soul was dead, and is alive; was lost, and is found.' Theodosius gave God greater thanks, that he had made him a *member of the church*, than *head of the empire.* So, bless God more for this mercy, that he hath made thee a member of Christ, than if he had made thee an heir of all the earth.

What, though God hath not abounded to thee in outward honours and estate? yet, if he hath abounded to thee in grace, this alone will be matter of eternal praises. Luther hath a notable story, which may be useful to this purpose: In the time of the *Council* of *Constance*, he tells us, there were two cardinals riding to the council; and in their journey they saw a shepherd in the field weeping: one of them pitying him, could not but ask him, Why he wept? At first he seemed loath to tell him; but, being urged, he told him, 'that, upon the beholding that toad which was before him, he considered, that he had never praised God as he ought, for making him such an excellent creature as a man; that he had not made him such a deformed creature as that toad.' Upon hearing whereof, the cardinal was much affected, considering how he had received greater mercies than this poor man, and yet had not returned unto God that praise which was due unto him. And will not this poor man, rise up in judgment against many of us? yea, have not the best of us cause to be greatly humbled before the Lord, who do not so affectionately remember the grace of God in making us christians, as that poor shepherd did, in making him a man? O friend, prove thyself to be born again, and, then, go thy way, rejoicing, leaping, and praising God.

III. 'Hath God, by his Spirit, regenerated, and made thee his child? then walk worthy of this special mercy and dignity.' This *worthy walking* is much pressed in scripture, as, Col. i. 10. 'Walk worthy of the Lord:' And, Eph. iv. 1. 'Walk worthy of the vocation wherewith ye are called.' In these, and other like places, the word *worthy* importeth no matter of merit or condignity, but only, a meer meetness, and congruity, or answerableness.

The Greek word *axioos*, translated *worthy*, is, in other places, turned *meet*, or, *as becometh;* as Rom. xvi. 2. Phil. i. 27. And where John the Baptist saith, 'Bring forth fruits worthy of repentance:' our new translations turn it, 'meet for repentance.' So that, the meaning of the aforesaid duty is, 'that ye carry yourselves, in some measure, suitable and answerable to your new-birth, and high dignity.' To which agreeth that of the Apostle Peter, 1 Pet. ii. 9. 'Ye are a chosen generation, a peculiar people, that ye should shew forth the praises of him, who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light.' As the regenerate are more excellent in their state and relation than the carnal and unregenerate; so ought they to be singular and exemplary in their lives and conversations.

This, Christ requireth of every true christian: For, saith he, speaking to his *disciples*, Mat. v. 47. 'What *do ye* more than others? as if he had said, you, who will approve yourselves to be sincere Christians, and the true disciples of Jesus Christ, must be of a more holy and heavenly frame, of a higher strain than the rest of men; you must be singular, and 'shine as lights in the midst of a sinful and crooked generation,' by living exemplary and convincing lives; that it may be said of you what God said of Job, 'There was none like him in all the earth;' as for wealth, so for piety, he being by many degrees the highest for grace in his age.

Hath God shined upon your souls by his grace? 'Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven,' Mat. v. 16.

The more to quicken you up to a singular and exemplary life, to a life above the rate of carnal and unregenerate men;

I. 'Consider thy high birth, and noble parentage.' For, being born of the Spirit, thou art thereby made partaker of the divine nature, and art become a child of God, a member of Christ, and hast blood royal running in thy veins: thy life ought to be suitable to thy birth and breeding, aspiring after higher things than worldly men do, or can do; and avoiding those base and filthy actions wherein carnal men take their chief delight: For, know, that thy sins go nearer the heart of God, and provoke him more, than the sins of other men. *Kai su tecnon, &c.* 'And thou *my son* Brutus, art *thou* one of them?' said Julius Cæsar to his son, when he saw him to be amongst *them* that murdered him: that went deeper to his heart, than the swords of all his enemies did, or could. In like manner, the sins of God's children are greater in his sight, and do more grieve him, than the sins of other men.

II. 'Consider thine high and holy calling.' Thou art called out of darkness into light; out of the kingdom of Satan, into the kingdom of the Lord Jesus. Shall there be no difference betwixt the children of the kingdom, and the children of the wicked one? betwixt God's servants and the devil's slaves? Art thou one of

the *called of God?* Oh! how doth it concern thee to follow the counsel of the apostle to the Ephesians; namely, 'to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith thou art called;' that is, suitable to the dignity and purity of it!

1. *Thy calling is an high calling*, Phil. iii. 14. And, therefore, as men called to high places, carry themselves answerable thereunto: In like manner, thou being called to be a Christian, it is thy duty (that thou mayest not disgrace thy holy profession, and that worthy name, by which thou art called) to carry thyself becomingly, and suitably to it, by hating every sin, labouring daily in the mortifying of every lust and corruption, keeping thyself unspotted of the world.

2. *Thy calling is an holy calling*, 2 Tim. i. 9. the end therefore is holiness: *For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness*, 1 Thess. iv. 7. Now an *holy calling* ought to be accompanied with an *holy life* and conversation; Being called from darkness to light, from sinfulness to holiness, from the flesh to the Spirit, from Satan to God; is it not most meet thou shouldst cast off the unfruitful works of darkness, and walk as a child of light? that thou shouldst no more *give thy members as servants unto sin, but as servants unto righteousness? That thou shouldst no more fulfil the lusts of the flesh, but walk in the Spirit after the motions thereof?* This is to walk worthy of the vocation whereunto *thou art called.*

III. 'Consider the many great and singular privileges God hath vouchsafed unto you.' Being raised above the condition of other men, it beseemeth not you to act as the men of the world; but to live above their rate; to be more holy and heavenly in your conversation; more zealous for God; more fervent in the performance of holy and religious duties. The Lord expects greater matters, and other manner of service from you, than from other men; for he hath done more for you, and bestowed more on you, than upon all the world besides. When you call to mind your privileges, reason thus with yourselves; Hath God made us partakers of such and such special mercies, and singular privileges? Oh then, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness! How ought we to walk worthy of such singular privileges, by singularity of actions, doing some singular things for God who hath dealt so singularly well for us! As God hath abounded to us in his choicest mercies, so he expects we should be abundant in singular duties.

CHAP. XVII.

Sheweth the singular good things, which the Regenerate ought to do above others.

I. 'TO make conscience of their precious time, and to improve it to the best advantage.' Carnal men make little or no conscience of spending their time to any *good* advantage. Oh the many golden hours, and days, and weeks, and years, that thousands of them spend, who yet cannot give the least account where they have done any thing which tends to the glory of God, the good of others, or the furthering their own salvation! Their minds are so much set upon their carnal lusts and pleasures, that their chief care is, not so much how to improve their time, as how they may pass it away in mirth and jollity: that which, when it is once gone, all the world will not buy it back, what a cheap thing is it accounted! But oh! how doth it concern such whom God hath called, to prize the time which he is pleased to afford unto them; and to be careful in improving the same to some good advantage! yea, to gather up the fragments of time, every inch of it, that nothing may be lost! We cannot well spare one spare hour. Oh make the best of thy day! To this end,

1. 'Consider that thy everlasting state depends upon thy well or ill spending of thy time.' Many make light of their time, and thereupon play and sport it away: Yet there is no moment which thou dost mispend, but, for aught thou knowest, it may be the very time upon which thine eternal state doth depend. Oh! what a madness must it needs be, for an hour's or day's pleasure, to hazard the loss of everlasting happiness, and to incur the danger of eternal misery! And yet, how few think of the passing away their time, or that any great matter depends thereupon!

2. 'Consider the preciousness of your time, which is of more worth than all the riches and treasures in the world:' for, these cannot purchase one minute of time. Should the Lord be pleased to vouchsafe, unto a damned soul in hell, but one week's time to live again upon the earth, for trial how he would improve the same to his soul's advantage, oh how highly would he prize it! how carefully would he improve every moment thereof! how serious would he be in every holy duty, and in all the concernments of his soul; how conscionable in spending of the Sabbath! how watchful would he be on that day over his thoughts, words, and actions, should he hear Christ tendered in the ministry of the gospel as a Saviour to poor sinners, oh how readily would he close with the offers of Jesus Christ, how heartily would he embrace him! should he be tempted by some carnal friends to *spend* one day with them in mirth and jollity, how would he answer them!

'Alas, the time on which my everlasting condition doth depend is very short; and must it not be egregious folly in me to trifle away part thereof? Shall I implunge my soul into eternal flames for a little pleasure, and short delight? Oh, God forbid.' And, hereby, may you see how precious time is. Surely, little reason have any to be sparing of their wealth, and so prodigal of their time; whereas all the wealth in the world (as before is said) cannot purchase one hour's time.

3. 'Consider how much precious time you have already lost; how many hours, and days, and weeks, and years you have trifled away, in vanity and pleasure, yea, in sin and wickedness.' Though, in likelihood, the greatest part of your time is past and gone, yet 'tis to be feared that little of your work is done: Is it not meet then, *now* to begin to make conscience of your precious time, and to improve it *better?* The time which you have already lost can *never* be recalled. O! let *no more* of it run out in vain! O think it *too much*, that you have spent so much of it already to so *little*, or such *evil* purpose! And now, at length, resolve to be thrifty, to be more watchful over yourselves, and more provident for hereafter. You have but a little time to live, yet much may be done in that little. Throw not away that inch which remains after the many years that are gone, and can no more be recalled.

4. 'Consider the shortness of thy life;' it is but a *moment* to eternity; and is it not a pity to lose any thing of that which is *precious* and *short?*

5. 'Consider as the *shortness*, so the *uncertainty* of thy life.' You know what was said to him who promised life to himself for many years, 'Thou fool, *this night* thy soul shall be taken from thee.' And it may be thou mayest this next night receive the like doom. And, if thy time be ended, and thy work to be begun, oh how sad is thy case like to be!

6. 'Consider as the *shortness* and *uncertainty* of thy time so the *greatness of the work to be performed therein:*' thy lusts must be *mortified*, thy graces *strengthened*, thine evidences for heaven *cleared up*, *&c.* Here is a great deal of work to be done in a little time. Doth it not then concern thee *speedily* to bestir thyself, and not to lose a minute?

7. 'Consider the *present time* is only thine to improve:' 'Behold now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation,' 1 Cor. vi. 2. Oh, then, why wilt thou trifle away the time which is, properly, *thine*, and promise to thyself great things in a time which is *none of thine?* For, even the *next hour*, yea, the *next minute* thou mayest be cut off by the stroke of *death;* and, then, all *opportunities* of doing and receiving good are *taken away.*

CHAP. XVIII.

Of embracing every opportunity of doing and receiving good.

II. ANOTHER singular thing which the regenerate ought to do above others is, 'To embrace *every* opportunity of doing and receiving good.' By doing *good* I mean, not only 'beneficence to the poor,' but also, *a conscionable performance of all Christian duties;* whether *they*, concern the glory of God, the edification of our brethren, or the salvation of our own souls. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might, saith the *wise man*,' Eccl. ix. 10. that is, whatsoever opportunity of doing good is afforded unto thee, do it vigorously and speedily, not deferring it till it be too late. Mark his reason in the next words; 'For, there is no work in the grave, whither thou art going.' As if he had said, 'in this life thou hast many opportunities of doing good, but in the grave thou shalt have neither power nor opportunities: When thy night cometh, there is an end of working; therefore, while it is day, and while thou hast an opportunity, up, and be doing.'

If thou art in the company of a godly experienced Christian, thou hast *then* an opportunity of gaining much spiritual good, and advantage to thine own soul; as by observing his *graces*, so by propounding thy *doubts* and *scruples* unto him. O let not such an opportunity pass away, without some spiritual improvement!

If thou art called to visit a dying friend, or neighbour, Oh what an opportunity hast thou put into thy hand to do his soul good! by advising him to think of *death*, and to prepare for it, to make his peace with *God*, to cast himself and the burden of his sins upon *Christ*, to build the hope of his salvation only upon that Rock the *Lord Jesus Christ*.

If, in walking abroad, or travelling on the road, thou fall into company, What good mayest thou do by some savoury and spiritual discourse of *God*, or of man's miserable condition by nature, or of the state of redemption by Jesus Christ, or the like? Oh how much might thy care this way abound to thy account, remember the words of the Apostle, 'Exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day.'

If the Lord hath given thee a family, and furnished thee with abilities for their instruction and edification; let not the souls that are with thee be lost through thy neglect: Thou hast daily opportunities to be sowing thy seed in their souls, which may spring up to their eternal life. And, for thy neighbours that live about thee, let them find thee a good neighbour to them; and that, they will best do, if thou endeavour to help them to be good Christians.

CHAP. XIX.

Of performing good duties after a right manner.

III. ANOTHER singular duty incumbent upon the regenerate, is, 'To be careful of the manner of performing good duties:' Not only to be conscionable in the use of ordinances, but likewise to work up their hearts to a conscionableness in the manner of doing them.

1. 'For, therein especially is our respect to God manifested;' As for the duties themselves, many respects may induce us to the outward performance of them; as, obedience to authority, desire of a good name, hope of meriting thereby, or the like. But it is respect to God (who searcheth the heart) that moveth men to do the good duties they take in hand, after a righteous manner, so as they may be pleasing and acceptable unto him.

2. 'The most holy duties we take in hand, are clean perverted and depraved, through our failing in the manner of performing them.' Yea, holy duties are thereby turned unto sin, as the prophet *Isaiah* implieth, Isa. lxvi. 3. 'He that killeth an ox for sacrifice, is as if he slew a man: he that sacrificeth a lamb, as if he cut off a dog's neck.' Though the sacrifice of oxen and lambs were good, and commanded by God himself; yet, because they failed in the manner of performing them, they were no more acceptable to God than the killing of men, or cutting off a dog's neck; which things were forbidden by the Law, and an abomination to the Lord.

3. 'Failing in the manner of performance, makes God not only to reject our duties, but pronounce a woe and a curse against the performers of them.' 'Cursed be he that doth the work of the Lord negligently,' Jer. xlviii. 10. Though it be the work of the Lord, that work which the Lord appointeth to be done; yet, notwithstanding, if it be done negligently, not after a right manner, 'Cursed is he that doth it.'

4. 'It is the right manner of performing duties, that obtaineth a blessing from God.' It may be, thou hast heard much, and prayed much, and fasted much, and yet hast found little good, or benefit thereby. Examine whether thou hast not been dead and dull, formal and perfunctory in them, doing them as if thou didst them not. If so, no marvel thou hast received so little good by them. As, therefore, thou wouldst be loath to pray in vain, or hear in vain, or fast in vain; as thou wouldst be loath to lose the things which thou hast wrought, see to it, that thou be as careful of the *manner*, as of the *matter* of them; *how* thou dost them, as *that thou dost them*. Do what thou dost with *all thy soul*, yea,

and with *all thy might*, and then thou mayest expect a plentiful and gracious return.

For the right manner of performing good duties, take these few directions:

I. 'Be sure you take Christ with you both for *assistance* and *acceptance*.'

1. 'For assistance.' 'For without me,' saith Christ, 'you can do nothing:' That is, without *union*, with Christ, and *communion* with him, you cannot perform any acceptable service unto God. Whensoever, therefore, you set upon good duty: in the first place, beg strength and assistance from Christ; and rest and lean upon him for his help; go not to pray, or hear but in the strength of the Lord.

2. 'Take Christ with you for acceptance, both of your persons and services.' Christ is the *beloved son of God*, with whom he is so well pleased, that likewise in him he is well-pleased with all those that come to God by him, and look for neither audience nor acceptance, but upon his account alone.

Whensoever, therefore, you go unto God in prayer, or in any other ordinance, carry Christ with you in the arms of your faith. *Plutarch*, in the life of *Themistocles*, reports, 'That it was the usual custom of some of the heathens, namely the *Molossians*, that when they would seek the favour of their king, they took *his son* in their arms, and so went unto him.' And questionless, it would be the wisdom of Christians, in seeking the face and favour of God, who is the King of heaven and earth, to take the holy child Jesus with them, without whom they may not see his face.

II. 'Stir up thyself, and all thy strength;' put forth thyself to the uttermost, strive to be lively, active, and stirring in spirit. Get the spirit of faith, and of power; this will be oil to the wheels, and wind to the sails, which set all a-going: let this be wanting, and thy best services will be lifeless and dead services, in which the Lord takes no delight.

There is a three-fold strength we should labour to put forth in all our holy duties.

1. Strength of intention.
2. Strength of affections.
3. Strength of body.

1. We must intend our work, as it were for our lives; for, so it is, whether it be the work of *praying*, *hearing*, *meditating*, or the like. We must put forth the strength of our *intention*, as well as of our *attention*, not giving way either to drousiness of body, or distractions of mind. But, Oh! what light matters are apt to steal away our minds and thoughts in the performance of holy duties! if one of our superiors were talking with us, he would expect that we should mind what he saith, and not turn aside to talk with every one that passeth by us; But, when *God* is speaking to us in

the ministry of his word, or we are speaking unto him by prayer,' how ordinarily do we turn aside to every vain thought and trifling business, which offereth itself to us? Intend God more earnestly, and this will fire your thoughts.

2. 'Strength of affection,' is required in every good duty. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might,' saith the wise man, Eccles. ix. 10. This may especially be applied to the duties of God's worship and service, that we do them vigorously, with all the strength of our affections: which the Apostle requireth, where he bids us *be fervent in spirit, serving the Lord*, Rom. xii. 11. The word in the Greek, *to pneumati zeontes*, notes an *ebullition*, or *boiling up of our spirits to the heighth*. There is nothing in the world more unbecoming the worship of God, than flatness of spirit, and coldness of affection, when a man serves God, as if he served him not. It was David's commendation, that *the zeal of God's house did eat him up*, Psalm lxix. 9. which expression sheweth the vehemency of his zeal, and strength of his affection, as in reforming God's house, so, in performing the duties of his worship and service. For this, Jacob was honored, and called Israel; because he prayed with the strength of his affections, and is therefore said to *wrestle with God in prayer*, whereby he prevailed, Hos. xii. 3, 4. As thou desirest to prevail with God in prayer, thou must, with *Jacob wrestle with him;* putting forth the strength of thine affections, which will be a special means to keep away vain wandering thoughts: so long as honey is boiling hot, flies will not venture on it. So, if the heart and affections be boiling hot in prayer, vain thoughts are not apt to enter in.

3. 'Strength of body,' must likewise be put forth in every good duty: For, God must be worshipped, as with *our spirits*, so with *our bodies*. And, blessed is the strength which is put forth in the service of God. Carnal men are apt to lay out the strength of their bodies upon their lusts: Why should not we be as ready to lay out the strength of our bodies in the service of God? Then may we have occasion to bless God, and say, 'Lord, thou mightest have left me to have spent my strength in sin; in the gratifying my carnal lusts; but blessed be thy name, who hast made me willing to spend, and be spent in the service of my God.'

III. 'Labour to keep close to God in holy duties.' It were well, if, in the performance of holy duties, we did keep close to the duties themselves; few go so far. But it must be our care not only to keep close to the duties, but likewise to keep close to God in the duties. We must labour, not only to mind what we are about, but likewise have an eye upon God, and to hold communion with him therein. In the use of every ordinance, let our main desire, care and endeavour be, To find God therein; and not to rest satisfied without meeting him, and conversing with him.

Let us never go *from* God, *without* God: never from the ordinance of God, without some special communion with God therein, without finding our hearts raised and affected in the duty, and revived and refreshed in his presence.

IV. In regard of our great inability, and insufficiency for the performance of any spiritual duty after a right manner: In the first place, let us beg of God, that by his Spirit he would enable us thereunto; for, it is the Spirit of God only that can help our infirmities; he can soften our hearts, quicken our dead hearts, enlarge our straitened hearts, &c. And, in praying for the assistance of the Spirit, let us plead the promise of God; saying, 'Lord, thou hast promised in thy word, that thy Spirit shall help the infirmities of thy servants: Oh! make good that promise unto me; let me feel and find the sweet breathings and actings, the lively quickenings and enlargements of thy Spirit upon my heart, carrying me forth with much life and vigour in the duty I am now going about.' This pleading the promise of God, puts a strong engagement upon him to perform what he hath said.

CHAP. XX.

Of walking circumspectly, and exactly.

IV. ANOTHER singular duty incumbent upon the regenerate is, 'To walk circumspectly and exactly, according to that of the Apostle, *See that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise.* The word in the original translated, *circumspectly*, cometh of two words, which signify to *go to the extremity of a thing.* We must be willing to go to the utmost of every command. The same word is used by the evangelist St. Matthew, when Herod charged the wise men to search *most diligently* and narrowly, to *make a close* and a *thorough* search, for the young child Jesus. So that by this phrase, is intended great *accurateness* and *exactness* in our Christian conversation, which the Spirit of God accounteth the greatest point of wisdom; as appeareth by these following words, 'not as fools, but as wise men.' It is no part of folly, but a great point of wisdom, to be circumspect in the whole course of our lives. I know the men of the world count preciseness of life, the greatest folly that may be: and, therefore, often call those, *precise fools*, who endeavour to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. But, at last, it will appear the greatest point of wisdom.

For the better clearing and pressing this duty, I shall shew you, wherein this exact walking doth consist.

1. 'In walking by rule.' As the carpenter when he would do

his work exactly, doth all by rule: So, must the Christian, that would walk accurately, he must walk by the word of God, which is the only adequate rule of holiness: He must eat and drink, and buy and sell, and work and rest, and do all by this rule. Therefore, saith the Apostle, Gal. vi. 16. 'As many as walk by this rule; peace be on them, and on the Israel of God.' Let our walking be never so spacious and glorious, yet, if it be not strait and *according to the rule of scripture*, as it will afford no true solid comfort at the last, so neither will it find acceptance with God. For, as nothing is a sin (how great a shew of evil soever it beareth) but that which swerveth from the direction of God's word: So, nothing is a good work, (how great a shew of goodness soever it beareth) but *only* that which is according to the direction of his word. Therefore, Moses giveth this in express charge to the Israelites, Deut. v. 32. 'Ye shall observe to do, as the Lord your God hath commanded you; ye shall not turn aside to the right hand, nor to the left.'

2. Our *exact walking* consisteth 'in having respect to the *inward and spiritual part of the law;* as well as to the *outward* and *external.*' In every command of God, there is both an *outward* and *external part*, and also *an inward* and *spiritual part.* The first, I may call, *the letter of the law:* the second, *the spirit of the law.* This, our Saviour excellently clears, in his sermon on the mount, where, reciting the sixth commandment, he saith, 'Thou shalt do no *murder*, there is the letter of the law; and then adds, by way of explanation, Mat. v. 21, 22. 'But I say unto you, whosoever is *angry* with his *brother* without a cause, shall be in *danger* of judgment;' there is the *spirit* of the law. So, afterwards, reciting the seventh commandment, he saith, 'Thou shalt not commit *adultery;*' there is the *letter* of the law; and then adds, 'But I say unto you, that *whosoever* looks on a woman to lust *after her*, hath committed *adultery with her* already in his *heart*,' Mat. v. 28. There is the *spirit* of the law, or the spiritual part thereof. The most diligent observation of the latter or external part of the law, without a care of the inward and spiritual part, is, as a body without a soul, a dead thing, which is no way acceptable unto the living God. Hence, our Saviour spent so many words to convince the Pharisees, who were many of them punctual in their outward observations, that they were yet horrible hypocrites, violating that law in their hearts, which they so boasted of, and pleaded with their mouths, being murderers in heart, adulterers in heart, though they committed no such wickedness in the outward man.

And, hereby, is the hypocrisy of many professors of christianity discovered, who reach no farther than the outside religion; whose godliness is nothing but carnal service, and bodily exercise. Whereas, the law is *spiritual*, as the apostle speaketh, 'reaching to the very inwards of the soul,' Rom. vii. 14. And, saith our

Saviour, John iv. 24. 'God is a Spirit, and will be worshipped inwardly with the spirit, as well as outwardly with the body.' Whosoever, therefore, walks *exactly*, contents not himself with the externals of christianity; but labours to bring up his heart to the inwards thereof; striving to suppress evil thoughts, to mortify unclean lusts, and all inordinate affections; to abhor and watch against secret impurities, as well as open impieties. This is to walk *exactly* and *accurately* indeed: for, so the word in the Greek *acriboos*, seemeth to import in its proper notion, *viz.* 'A going from the bottom to the top of the rule.'

3. Our *exact walking* consisteth in 'a careful avoiding all occasions of evil, and temptations thereunto.' Having, by sad experience, found such and such things to have been snares, and occasions of sin unto us, it is our duty, and will be our wisdom, carefully to shun and eschew the same, especially, considering, that by running into temptations, we displease the Lord, and provoke him to give us over to our weakness, and to the power of our corruptions; that so by our falls, we may, for the time to come, be more wise and wary.

Every man by nature, is like dry wood, which is apt to kindle, so soon as fire is put to it. There needs not any devils to tempt us. Dry stubble will take fire, without any bellows to blow it. Let the least occasion that is, be offered unto us, how easily doth it take? every spark will catch upon our tinder hearts. The first sin that proved so fatal to mankind, came by temptation; the devil prevailed with Eve to go and see the forbidden fruit, telling her, That though she might not eat it, yet she might lawfully look on it, and that became the occasion of her fall. For, from *sight* and *view*, she proceeded to *touch* and *taste*, to the taking in of that which proved the bane, both of her and hers.

By the like means, how sadly doth the devil prevail upon souls daily; what windows doth he make our eyes and ears to let in temptation first, and then iniquity? what snares doth he make of our voluptuous tables? our vain and loose companions? our gorgeous apparel? our vain and wanton fashions? even forming our hearts into the image of those vanities, and leading us out to all iniquity. As our Saviour, therefore, taught us to pray, 'that we *enter* not into temptation;' so, it will be our wisdom to see to it, that our practice be according to our prayers. What a mockery is it, this hour, to pray against temptations, and the next hour to be running into them? Pray against temptations, and watch against them. Watch against all temptations, but especially such as are most taking with thee: and such as have a tendency to thy bosom and best beloved sins. For from them is most danger to be feared, they having most strength from our nature. The devil, knowing full well, which are our bosom and beloved sins,

and most predominant lusts; unto them especially, and with greatest success, doth he apply his temptations.

4. Our exact walking consisteth 'in abstaining from appearances of evil, as well as from apparent and direct evils.' 1 Thess. v. 22. As there are some things apparently evil, so, there are other things in shew and appearance only evil. He who walks *circumspectly* and *exactly* will as carefully shun the one as the other. He will not adventure upon any thing that looks like sin, or that hath the least affinity with it: If the thing be doubtful whether it may or may not be done, he will do that which is most safe, and leave the other undone: Yea, though he know a thing to be lawful in itself, yet, if it may prove a stumbling-block in the way of another, and so, be an occasion of sin unto him, he will carefully avoid the same.

Upon this account, St. *Paul* 'resolved to avoid the eating of flesh,' though he might lawfully do it: yet, when it was like to be a stumbling-block to his weak brother, in regard it had an appearance of evil in it, he said, 'If meat make my brother to offend, I will eat no flesh while the world standeth,' 1 Cor. ix. 13. Upon this ground, likewise, the *Apostles* and *Elders* in the first general council at *Jerusalem* imposed upon the *Gentiles* 'abstinence from meat offered to idols, from things strangled, and from blood,' Acts xv. 29. Not for that these meats were, in themselves, unclean and unlawful; but, because they were apprehended to be so unto many of the *Jews*, who were kept off from Christ, because those meats, in which they supposed to be such uncleanness were ordinarily eaten by the *Christians*. Hereupon, it concerns us, in all our actions, to be satisfied, not only of the lawfulness, but likewise of the expediency of them. For, many things, in themselves, may be lawful, which, yet, in some respects, may not be expedient; because they have some shew of evil in them, or are liable to some misconstruction, or, may be occasions of sin unto ourselves, or of scandal or offence to our weak brother: or, may strengthen and confirm wicked men in their ungodly courses and the like.

But, here, in this caution, it is to be observed, that all necessary duties commanded by God, ought to be performed by us, though our brother be offended at them, and though, to the world they have some appearance of evil. Christ's doctrines, works and conversations were an offence to many in his days, yet he went on therein, and pronounced them 'blessed that were not offended in him.' We may not, therefore, shun profession of holiness, and the practice of godliness, because, unto worldly men, it appeareth but *brain-sick peevishness*, and an *irrational preciseness*: but, being commanded by God in his word, they ought to be endeavoured after. I may not wound mine own conscience to secure my brother's.

5. 'Our *exact walking* consisteth, 'in a moderate use of lawful things.' That overmuch liberty, which some men hath given to themselves, in such things as are in their own nature lawful: hath proved great occasion of sin unto them. Our Saviour seemeth to blame the men of the old world, that, when the flood came upon them, 'there *were* eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building,' Luke xvii. 27, 28: Things, no doubt, in themselves, lawful to be done: but, by over-using those lawful things, and setting their hearts upon them, they laid aside all care of heavenly things, and encreased their pride and covetousness, neglecting the threatening of a flood, and so drowned themselves in perdition.

The Apostle, therefore, tells us, 1 Cor. vii. 29, 30, 31. 'That they who *marry* must be as if they *married* not: and they who buy, as if they bought not; and they who use this *world*, as not *abusing* it.' There is a lawful using the comforts of this life, and an unlawful, or an abusing of them. We lawfully use them, when we enjoy them with moderation, and with subordination to spiritual grace, and heavenly glory; when we use them too much, even excessively, in respect of the measure; and inordinately, in respect of the manner; when letting out our hearts too much upon them, the things which should lead us to God, withdraw us from him.

To spend some time in honest recreations, for the refreshing our minds, and strengthening our bodies, is lawful: But, to waste too much of our precious time in sports and pastimes is to make a vocation of our recreations; or, to give our hearts unto our pleasure to use those delights for themselves, and not for God; or, to use them more for gain, than for refreshment, they are thereby turned unto sin.

In like manner; sometimes to feast with our friends and neighbours is lawful; but to be too frequent therein, or 'intemperate feeding without fear,' as the apostle Jude hath it, Jude v. 12. never tasting the sweetness of God in the creature, nor having respect to that communion which should be among saints, is to abuse God's good creature.

So to be diligent in the work of our calling, is, in itself, both lawful and commendable: But, when we shall be so diligent in our particular calling, that we neglect the duties of our general calling, as christians, I mean, when we are so taken up with our worldly businesses and employments, that we can find no time for serving God either secretly or in our chambers privately with our families; is to make our lawful calling sinful unto us: Much more, when we mingle fraud and deceit with our dealings, and cannot be content with that gain that comes in by righteousness, and honesty in all our ways; this is to turn our lawful calling into a mystery of iniquity.

The best of God's children are apt to use the lawful things of this world unlawfully, and to abuse them by their excess therein. Did not our Saviour warn his *disciples* that they should take heed of abusing, as their meat and drink unto surfeiting and drunkenness, so their callings to worldliness and covetousness? 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness, and cares of this life!' Luke xxi. 34. Who would not have thought the *disciples* of Christ far enough from these sins? yet they must take heed to themselves therein. If the green tree may so easily take fire; what then will the dry do?

O then, how doth it concern us to set bounds to ourselves in all lawful things! not to exceed, either in our recreations, or in our vocations, or in our eating, drinking, and the like: but, to observe the golden mean, the rather, because the devil in nothing more prevaileth with God's people, than in their immoderate and inordinate usage of things lawful; knowing full well, that the godly will not easily be drawn to the committing of such things as carry wickedness in their foreheads, he therefore layeth his snares for them in the use of things lawful; as their meat and drink, their apparel and recreation, their trading and traffic, with the like: wherein his snares being not so visible, he oftentimes prevaileth with them. The apostle declaring what a cruel, crafty, and malicious adversary the devil is, whom he setteth forth, to be a 'roaring lion, that walketh about seeking to devour,' 1 Pet. v. 9. he thereupon adviseth us to be, 'as sober in the use of things lawful and indifferent, so watchful over ourselves,' lest we be foiled therein.

For your better help therein, take these few directions:

1. 'In the free use of lawful things, be ever jealous of yourselves, lest you abuse them to intemperance, and excess.' This hath been the folly of many, that, presuming too much, as on their Christian liberty, so, upon their own strength have adventured on such temptations, as have occasioned their fearful falls.

2. 'Labour to make a spiritual improvement of all the lawful comforts which God hath afforded to you for delight.' And so, whilst you refresh your bodies, you will cherish your souls. Thus, in your eating and drinking, often meditate on God's bounty, in providing so plentifully for you; and not only take in meats, but likewise give out gracious discourses and instructions. For, what can it be but egregious folly, when you are feeding your bodies, to neglect your souls? In putting on your clothes, meditate on the robe of Christ's righteousness, which alone can make you amiable in the sight of God; desiring, with the apostle, 'to be found clothed therewith at the great day.'

3. 'Consider that to use your lawful comforts to the utmost extent, is the next door to sin.' He who will go to the utmost ex-

tent of what he may lawfully do, is in danger to go beyond it, and to do also that which is unlawful. He who will walk upon the brink of a river, may fall into the water: And he who will take the utmost liberty he may, is very near falling into sin.

CHAP. XXI.

Of the danger of Covetousness as being the Root of all Evil.

V. ANOTHER singular duty incumbent upon the regenerate is, 'to beware of covetousness, and overloving the world, as being the root of all evil.' I do not say, that our hearts being changed and renewed, we ought thereupon wholly to abandon the world, and give over all worldly businesses and employments. For, grace, and a worldly calling may very well stand together; yea, a man may be a sincere, holy Christian, and yet a great dealer in the world: nay, grace engageth a man to be a good husband, to improve the estate God hath bestowed on him: But yet, we ought not insatiably to desire, and inordinately to hunt after riches, as if they were the only things, or the great things, to be sought after; this is covetousness. It is not the having of riches, but the immoderate desiring and loving of them, and overvaluing of them, which denominates a man, covetous. A man may have much of this world's goods, and yet be no worldling: And another may have little, and yet be covetous. This sin is especially in the heart.

Q. May not a godly man desire riches, seeing they are often in scripture termed blessings, which God hath promised as a reward of his service?

A. There is a moderate desire of riches which is a lawful; and an immoderate, or inordinate desire, which is unlawful. Then is our desire of riches moderate, when we desire no more than is needful, and can be content to want that, when God will have it so.

Q. What may be accounted needful?

A. 1. That which is meet for the state and calling wherein God hath set us.

2. That which is requisite for the charge committed to us. As, if a man have a wife, and children, and servants, or kindred lying upon his charge, what is needful and sufficient for them, may be desired and sought after.

3. That which is needful for the future livelihood and maintenance of wife and children, may lawfully be desired and sought after. The apostle layeth it down as a duty, 'that parents ought to lay up for their children,' 2 Cor. xii. 14.

Besides this moderate desire of seeking after riches, there is an immoderate desiring, an inordinate seeking after them. As, when a man is not content with that portion which God by his providence doth afford unto him, but insatiably thirsts after more: and rather than fail of his desire, will both neglect his God and his soul, and also venture on the use of any unlawful means, as lying, swearing, false weights and measures, with the like, for accomplishing the same, which is wickedness in any, but especially such as make a profession of religion.

Yet how many professors are there in our days, who, though they pretend much love to Christ, yet, by their practice, it appears, that their love of riches is greater and stronger than their love of him?

1. For, how are their thoughts more upon the world, and the things thereof, than on Christ? No sooner are they awake from their sleep, but the world presently takes possession of their hearts; and their thoughts are upon their estate, how they may increase the same, and that with unwearied care and labour; when every little service that is done for Christ is a weariness to them.

2. How do their discourses run out more upon their riches, than on Christ? Yea, with what freedom and delight do they talk of their wealth, and of the means of getting and increasing the same? and scarce a word of Christ all the day long. Which doth clearly discover the covetousness which lieth in their hearts; for 'out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.' As the doorkeeper said unto Peter, 'Thou art surely of Galilee, for thy speech *bewrayeth* thee:' so, whosoever shall make the world the whole matter and subject of his discourse, it may be truly said of him, 'he is a citizen of the world, for his speech bewrayeth him.'

3. How eager and keen are their desires after the riches of this world? or, at least, after a further portion, and provision for themselves, wives and children?

4. How do they toil and labour, spending their sweat and strength in seeking after riches? thinking no care and study too much, nor pains too great, for increasing their wealth and store. How do they rise earlier for their worldly businesses than for their prayers, or any spiritual exercises?

5. How do they suffer the world to take up so much of their precious time, that they can scarce find any leisure either for closet-devotions, or family-prayers? but make their religion give place to their worldly businesses. And when, at any time, they fall upon the performance of holy duties, how are their hearts, in that very time, taken up with worldly thoughts and imaginations? So that, instead of conversing with God in his holy ordinances, and enjoying communion with him therein, they converse with the world, and hold communion with the devil.

O what a shame is it for such as are brought out of darkness

into marvellous light, having their understandings enlightened with the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ, and are able to discern the mysteries of godliness, that they should set their hearts and affections upon base and transitory things! that they should lay out themselves so much in the pursuit of them, and never think they have laid up sufficient of these earthly treasures! What a shame is it for such as profess themselves the sons of God, to live like sons of men, as if their portion and happiness were only in this life! That they, who profess themselves heirs to an heavenly inheritance, should so much dote upon earthly things! what a shame is it for such as have reasonable souls, capable of an everlasting life, and of communion with God both here and hereafter, should so far debase their natures, as live like moles and worms in the earth, and to root like swine, in mud and dung!

Oh how doth it concern you, daily to humble yourselves for this sin, and to loath and abhor it, and watch against it for the time to come: for, as every evil is to be abhorred, so especially such as are disgraceful to the gospel of Jesus Christ, and to the religion which you profess. Let us all therefore, who have given our names unto Christ, labour to mortify this sin in us: let us use this world, and the things thereof, as if we used them not; neither in our judgments esteeming, nor in our hearts affecting, nor in our practice seeking them before spiritual grace and heavenly-glory.

That we may be the better quickened up thereunto, let us oft consider the manifold mischiefs that do usually follow and accompany this sin of covetousness.

I. 'It is the root of all evil,' Tim. vi. 10. There is no evil which a covetous man will forbear; his covetousness will put him upon the acting and committing all manner of sin that will serve his greedy design. It will make a man turn the day of sacred rest into a day of bodily labour; it will make him use a wicked balance, and deceitful weights: 'For this they are full of violence and lies,' saith the prophet Micah, Mic. vi. 11, 12. It oft-times raiseth wars, and sets, the world together by the ears: it occasioneth the neglect both of their own and others' souls: it enticeth us into hell, for the sake of living plentifully on earth: it causeth parents to neglect the souls of their children, and children to wish the death of their parents: it maketh people to hate their ministers, and ministers to neglect their people.

II. 'Covetousness alienates the soul of man from God; and that several ways;' as,

1. 'From the thoughts of God:' For, 'God is not in all his thoughts,' Psalm x. 4. When he awakes in the night, his mind is wholly taken up with worldly matters, without a thought of God, or of any good thing. When he is following the works of his calling, how he is wholly drowned and swallowed up therein.

2. 'It alienates the soul of man from the love of God:' For, 'if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,' 1 John ii. 15.

3. 'It alienates the soul of man from attending upon God in his ordinances:' As you may see in the invited guests in the parable, whose eager desire after the things of this world, kept them from coming to the wedding-feast.

III. 'Covetousness makes a man unthankful for his present state and condition, though, in itself an estate very full and comfortable.' His mind is so much upon what he hath not, that he neither takes notice, nor tastes the sweetness of what he hath: his full vessel, in his own apprehension, is an empty bottle. Finding no contentment in what he hath, he is full of murmuring and repining, that he hath not what he would have. Many a gracious poor man, that hath little of this world's goods, hath oftentimes more satisfaction and contentment in his little, than he that hath the greatest earthly revenues, in all his abundance.

IV. 'Covetousness works the heart to a mean and low esteem of things spiritual and heavenly.' From such as love the world and the things thereof over-much, Christ, to be sure, hath love little enough: their eyes are so blinded, that they see not his beauty; and their pallet so distempered, that they taste not his sweetness: and therefore, with Esau, prefer a mess of pottage before a birth-right: and with the men of Shechem, prefer the bramble before the vine, the olive, and the fig-tree. Worldly men prefer these poor empty things, the brambles of the world before Jesus Christ the true and living vine; yea, and above the blessed birth-right of God's new-born children.

V. 'Covetousness depriveth a man of the comfort of what he hath and possesseth.' For, the having of all is as nothing, to him that hath an immoderate desire after more. Ahab's crown and kingdom yielded him no comfort, after he had set his heart upon poor Naboth's vineyard. The want of this did more molest and vex him, than the enjoyment of his whole kingdom did solace and comfort him: 'For this he came heavy and displeased to his house; laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would not eat bread,' 1 Kings xxi. 24.

VI. 'Covetousness exposeth men to manifold temptations, making them ready to yield to Satan's wicked suggestions: 'They that will be rich,' saith the Apostle, 1 Tim. vi. 9. 'fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men into perdition.' As if he had said, They who set their hearts upon their riches, whose hearts run after their covetousness, are fit for any temptation, ready to yield to any of Satan's wicked suggestions, for the satisfying their covetous humour. 'Judas (as Tertullian thinks) was pretty honest till he carried the bag, and that gave him occasion to discover the rottenness that was in his heart.'

CHAP. XXII.

Of living by Faith in God's Promises.

VI. ANOTHER singular duty incumbent upon the regenerate, is, to live by faith, casting themselves upon God in Christ, and upon his gracious promises in all their straits and dangers, for such needful and useful things as they stand in need of. *To live by faith*, is, 'not only to believe in Christ for salvation, but also firmly to rest and rely upon God, and his gracious promises expressed in his word, for support under all our trials, for succour in all our distresses, for assistance against all assaults, for deliverance out of all our dangers, and for supply of all our wants, whether temporal or spiritual.'

Thus did those ancient worthies, mentioned, Heb. xi. There we read, that into whatsoever trouble or strait they were brought, they so lived by faith in God's promises, that nothing could dismay them, much less overthrow them. And, if, in like manner, thou couldst but quietly rest upon God, and his gracious promises, thou wouldst in thy greatest trials and troubles, be *more* than conqueror, as the Apostle speaketh.

When, therefore, thou art troubled for thy sins, groaning under the weight and burden of them, then throw thyself upon the merits and righteousness of Jesus Christ, and there let thy soul rest itself in hope of the pardon of thy sins here, and of eternal life and salvation hereafter; venturing upon that comfortable promise, 'Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' Mat. xi. 28.

When thou art assaulted with the temptations of Satan, and fearest lest thou shouldst be overcome by them, then look up unto God, trusting in him for deliverance in due time, and for support in the mean time, relying upon that gracious promise, 'God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that you are able, but will, with the temptation, make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it,' 1 Cor. x. 13.

When thou art under any spiritual desertion, sitting in darkness, without any spark of comfort, then look up unto God with the eye of faith for the light of his countenance, and the assurance of his loving favour, resting and refreshing thy drooping soul, with that comfortable promise, 'In a little wrath have I hid my face from thee, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy Redeemer,' Isa. liv. 8.

When thou apprehendest thyself weak and insufficient for the performance of duties, then look up unto God, who hath promised to help the weaknesses and infirmities of his servants, and trust upon the power of Jesus Christ; then wilt thou be able to say

with the Apostle, *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me*, Phil. iv. 13.

When thou feelest thy corruptions strongly working and stirring in thee, then look up unto God who is able, and hath promised to subdue thine iniquities, and to keep down the power of thy lusts, laying hold on that good word, 'Sin shall not have dominion over you, for ye are not under the law but under grace,' Rom. vi. 14.

When thou art reviled and persecuted by wicked and ungodly men, then look up unto God with the eye of faith, trusting in him for help and strength; comforting thyself with that gracious saying of our Saviour, 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven,' Mat. v. 11, 12.

When thou art straitened in these outward things, and, thereupon, art full of worldly fears and cares, what to eat, and what to drink, and what to provide for wife and children; then look unto God, and, 'by faith cast all thy care upon him, who careth for thee;' resting upon that comfortable promise, Psal. xxxiv. 10. 'The young lions do lack, and suffer hunger; but they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.' Though thou mayest not have that abundance and affluency which some others do enjoy, yet thou shalt not want that which God seeth good for thee, *who will supply all thy need according to his riches*, Phil. iv. 19.

Thus in all thy straits and distresses thou mayest, by the sovereign power of faith working upon the gracious promises of God, exceedingly revive and refresh thy troubled spirit: for, all the promises of God set down in his word for thy comfort and support, being sealed with the blood of Christ, are all Yea, and Amen, as true as *Truth* itself, and therefore shall assuredly, in their due time, be accomplished.

For thy better encouragement to this Christian duty of *living by faith*, seriously weigh these few things:

I. *The properties of God;* more especially,

1. 'His Almighty power,' whereby he is able to strengthen thee in all thy weaknesses, to support thee under all thy trials and temptations, in a word, to perform whatsoever he hath promised. This made Abraham, with strong confidence, to rest upon the promise of God, which the Apostle thus setteth forth, Rom. iv. 20, 21. 'He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strong in faith; being fully persuaded, that what he had promised, he was able to perform.' Abraham's eyeing the *power of God*, was it that made him so confidently rest upon his promise.

2. 'His truth and faithfulness in performing what he hath promised:' For, saith the Apostle to the Hebrews, *Faithful is he that*

promiseth, Heb. x. 32. We read how, under the law of God commanded by Moses, concerning him that voweth or promiseth any thing to the Lord, 'that he shall not break his word, but shall do according to all that proceedeth out of his mouth,' Deut. xxx. 2. And shall the Lord say, and not do it? shall he promise, and not perform it? Surely, it is as impossible for him *not to be* as *not to keep his word*, and not to perform what he hath promised.

Indeed, the Lord many times maketh his children wait long for the accomplishment of his promises; yet, he never faileth to be as good as his word: which, duly considered, cannot but strengthen our faith in the firm expectation of all good things promised, and enable us, quietly and contentedly to rest and repose ourselves in God, for the accomplishment of what he hath promised, and not to doubt thereof, though he seem long to defer the performance of them.

3. 'His infinite wisdom;' whereby he dispenseth the good things contained in his promises, in their fittest time and season, and when they shall make most for his own glory, and his children's good. Far be it, therefore, from us to prescribe unto God the time and season for the performance of his promises: but let us rather resolve, with patience, to wait his appointed time and season, who is infinite in wisdom, and so, knoweth what is best and convenient for us, even better than we ourselves. Thus did the church, 'Our eyes wait upon the Lord our God, until he have mercy upon us,' Psalm cxxiii. 4. Therefore, as the Lord speaketh by the prophet Isaiah, Isa. xxi. 16. 'He that believeth shall not make haste;' because he is assured by faith, that though he have not the thing he desireth at his own time, yet he shall have it in that time which God, in his wisdom, knoweth to be best for him, and when it shall make most for his good.

II. 'Take notice of the particular fruits of living by faith, recorded in scripture, some whereof, are these;

1. 'Protection from things hurtful.' Though Daniel was cast into a den of lions, yet, it is said, 'That no manner of hurt was found on him,' Dan. vi. 23. And this reason is rendered thereof, 'because he believed in God's word:' by faith relying on his power, whom he knew was able to deliver him.

2. 'Provision of needful good things.' Therefore the Apostle, 2 Tim. vi. 17. exhorteth to *trust in the living God*, and that on this ground, *he giveth us richly all things to enjoy:* namely, all such things as he, in his wisdom, seeth to be needful for us. And, to set out God's bounty in providing for such as live by faith in his promises, the wise man saith, Prov. xxviii. 25. 'He that putteth his trust in the Lord shall be made fat,' that is, he shall not only have such a competency, as is absolutely necessary to preserve life, or to keep body and soul together; but also such plenty and abundance, as will make him fat, and well-liking.

3. 'Comfort in every condition,' is another fruit of living by faith in God's promises. The promises of God, in his word, are the Christian's cordials, to cheer up his fainting spirits, when he is ready to sink. They are his *aqua vitæ*, to revive him when he is ready to swoon. They are breasts of consolation, full of sweet nourishment for the faint and weak. They are sacred and sure anchors, in the tempestuous seasons of trouble and affliction, to stay and fix believers amidst all tossings whatsoever. They are roses that blow in the winter, which, with their fragrancy, revive drooping and dejected souls, in the sad winter of their desertion, when the verdure of all other comforts wither, and droop like leaves that are bitten with the frost. This, David found in his own experience; for, saith he, 'Thy promises are my *comfort* in my affliction; for thy *word* hath quickened me,' Psalm cxix. 50.

4. 'Contentment in our present state and condition,' is another fruit of living by faith. A believer is like a *die* that hath four squares, throw it which way you will, it falls upon a bottom. Let God cast a believer into what condition he pleaseth, he still falleth upon his bottom of contentment; he will be contented with his present state, believing it to be ordered by God as in wisdom, so in much mercy and goodness to him.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Heavenly-mindedness.

VII. 'ANOTHER singular duty incumbent upon the regenerate, is, to be spiritually minded, by a frequent contemplation of spiritual and heavenly things.' It is not some few flitting, transient thoughts on God or heaven, wherein this duty consists: but thoughts resting and fixing on some spiritual subject. The truth is, the thoughts of all men fly up and down like birds in the air, or chaff in the wind; and some of these may light sometimes on God or heaven: but they are soon off, and fixed on some worldly matter, or some impertinencies or other; and, therefore, cannot denominate a man to be spiritually-minded: which is another manner of business than many are aware of: 'It is a thinking with thought upon thought, is a reiteration and multiplication of the thoughts of the mind upon God, and the things of God, and this in order to the affecting the heart deeply with them.'

It is not sufficient to think and think oft of the love and goodness of God, but we must labour to get our hearts inflamed with a love unto him again. It is not sufficient to think and think often of sin, and the misery it hath implunged us in; but we must so think thereof, as to work our hearts to a hatred of sin, and a fear

of that wrath of God it hath exposed us, and made us liable to, and to a looking after Jesus Christ, who alone can free us from the guilt of our sins, and from the punishment due unto us for the same.

This is a work of so great concernment and advantage, as none can truly apprehend, but such as have made trial therein. David, who was a man full of holy and heavenly affections, was full of heavenly meditation. And, from the experience of that abundant sweetness and comfort he found therein, doth often, in his book of Psalms, commend it unto others; and pronounceth that man *blessed, who meditates in the law of God, day and night,* Psalm i. 2.

Let thy soul full often soar aloft upon the wings of divine contemplation: Let not any solitary seasons pass away, without some spiritual meditation and conference with thy God: either take a sorrowful survey of thy manifold sins, which may draw from thee, as hearty grief for the same, so hearty ejaculations for the pardon and forgiveness of them; or take a view of God's blessings and favours towards thee; and let this enlarge and raise up thine heart in praises and thanksgivings unto him; or bathe thyself in an admiring commemoration of the meritorious blood of the immaculate Lamb, Christ Jesus, which was abundantly shed for the washing of thy body and soul from the filthy spots and stains of sin: seriously think what he hath done and suffered for thee; how he hath fulfilled the law, and undergone the punishment due to thy sins; and now in heaven maketh intercession for thee, by presenting himself an all-sufficient sacrifice unto his Father for thy sins: O think with thyself, what thou must have suffered for thy sins, if he had not suffered for them! What thou hadst been, if he had not redeemed thee, even a bond-slave of Satan, and fire-brand of hell!

Especially, let thy soul full often meditate on the glorious things which the Lord hath reserved in heaven, for such as here do sincerely serve him, and obey the gospel of Jesus Christ. O think with thyself, what a blessed thing it will be, to live in the vision and fruition of God himself; 'in whose presence there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore:' as also, what an happiness it will be to behold the glorious body of Jesus Christ shining there with such incomprehensible beauty, as shall infinitely delight the eyes of the beholders, and that to all eternity, without satiety: for, the longer the saints behold Christ, the more they will be ravished with joy and delight. Ponder, likewise, as on the excellent qualities wherewith thy soul and body shall be adorned in heaven, so on the excellency of that place, which is set forth in scripture by pearls and precious stones.

And, the more to set off this glory and blessedness, oft consider with thyself the deplorable state of the damned in hell, who feel nothing for the present but wrath and vengeance; and can

expect nothing for the future, but the fuller vials of God's indignation to be poured on them to all eternity.

Such considerations as these, will serve as notable helps to draw and keep thy heart heaven-ward, and to turn all the streams of thy desires and longings towards the God of glory. But oh, how many Christians are there, who, having an hope towards God, and some confidence of their interest in things above, do, notwithstanding, converse but very little with them? Their thoughts are seldom on heaven or heavenly things; that, notwithstanding all their confidence, they may well question whether their treasure be there.

Consider, reader, as before the Lord, whether this be not thine own case: thou canst not be ignorant, that an heart estranged from heaven, hath little evidence that he hath any part or place therein: And wilt thou yet persuade thyself that God is thine, when thou carest no more for him? Dost thou highly prize an heavenly mind, and account them the best and happiest Christians, that are much in heaven? and yet, is it not grievous to thee to find, that thou didst *never* in all thy life, it may be, or *but very seldom*, fix thy thoughts thereon for a quarter of an hour together? but hast many and many a time suffered the devil to run away with thy thoughts, and to detain them on his dunghill below.

Certainly, it were better the devil had power to run away with thine estate, than with thy thoughts, and to order their motions at his pleasure. Oh the multitude of worldly and covetous thoughts! of wanton and unclean thoughts! of proud and ambitious thoughts! of wicked and profane thoughts! yea, of blasphemous and atheistical thoughts that lodge in the hearts of most of us, and there revel it day and night! Oh the speculative filthiness, and contemplative uncleanness, that not only harbours, but likewise finds hearty welcome and entertainment there!

Surely, friend, thou hadst best look to thyself, and get thy heart cleared of these evil guests, thy vile and vain thoughts: drive away these birds of prey, and then the thoughts of God will be more familiar and precious to thee. That thou mayest get up to this heavenly-mindedness, take these directions,

1. 'Humble thyself unfeignedly for thy great strangeness to God and heaven, that thou hast so rarely set thine heart on things above:' And, for the time to come, let it be thy special care and endeavour, to habituate thyself to spiritual and heavenly meditations, and frequently to steep thy soul in heaven's delights.

2. 'When thou findest thy mind and thoughts to be employed by the devil, and carried away from God, lift up thine heart by earnest and fervent prayer unto *him*, who is the *Father of spirits*, and hath power over devils; and beg of him, that, as by his permission, he hath suffered the unclean spirit to enter into thee; so, he would command him speedily to depart from thee, that thy

mind may be free for its proper work.' For, He only can 'cast down imaginations, and every thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bring into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ,' 2 Cor. x. 5.

3. 'Work up thy heart to a perfect detestation of all vain and wicked thoughts,' that thou mayest be able to say with David, *I hate vain thoughts*, Psal. cxix. 113. This will heighten thy resolutions to a greater watchfulness against these wicked thoughts for the time to come, and make thee to use thine utmost endeavour to drive them away; so that, though they may arise in thy heart; yet they may not lodge there. And know this, for thy comfort, that those vain and wicked thoughts, which thou dost, from thy heart, hate and detest, shall not be laid to thy charge, at the great day of account.

4. 'Above all things, keep a watch over thine heart;' according to that counsel of the wise man, Prov. iv. 23. 'Keep thine heart with all diligence.' As if he had said; Above all keeping, keep thy heart; which is like a city, liable every moment, both to outward assaults and inward commotions. Not only Satan, thine arch-enemy, is ever watchful for an opportunity to cast therein his fiery darts and sensual objects; but there are also many rebellious stirrings within, which spring from the fountain of original corruption, over which thou must especially watch; and dismiss them with loathing and detestation. If vain and wanton thoughts be not stifled in the conception, what monstrous wickedness may they not bring forth? How great a fire may these little sparks kindle!

5. 'Wean thy heart and affections more and more from worldly cares and pleasures, which clog the soul that it cannot mount aloft.' As a bird, whose wings are limed, is not able to take her flight on high: so, the man whose heart is entangled with the cares of this life, and the pleasures of sin, will not be able to get above ground; the wings of holy meditation will not raise it on high; yea, such a carnal and earthly mind is altogether unfit for heavenly meditation, and very backward and unwilling to it. What better reason can be given why many think so little of God, his word and works, or of any good thing, but because their hearts are so full of the world, and their affections set so much upon the same? 'Where their treasure is, there will their hearts also be.'

6. 'Be often lifting up thine heart to heaven in some spiritual ejaculations, especially in the morning.' Such as find themselves subject to wind in their stomachs through emptiness, use, before they go forth, to take a morning's draught: and, as great need is there for such as are subject to vain, wanton, worldly thoughts, every morning to prepossess their hearts with the thoughts of God, and of his glorious majesty; his omnipresence, and omniscience,

his purity, justice, and the like; and not only mornings, but, throughout the day, whenever thou findest vain or wicked thoughts to arise at any time within thee, meet them presently with a prayer, lift up thine heart in some short ejaculatory request unto God, for power and strength to keep down and suppress the same.

7. 'Labour to spiritualize every outward occurrence by raising heavenly meditations from the same.' There is not any creature thou beholdest, or any thing that befals thee, but thou mayest make some other spiritual use, and improvement thereof. As the *Bee* sucks honey out of every flower; so mayest thou extract spiritual and holy thoughts from every thing thou seest, and beholdest: yea, from all occurrences and emergencies; which will be a special means to prevent the devil and lust, and to keep out those vanities and wickednesses, which, otherwise, would fill thine head and heart withal.

8. 'Labour to get thine heart furnished with the knowledge of God and his word,' which will take up thine heart with better things, and leave no room for these unclean birds. As the emptiness of the stomach maketh it subject to windiness; so, it is the emptiness of our hearts that make them so full of vain, foolish thoughts. *A good man*, saith our Saviour, *out of the good treasure of his heart bringeth forth good things*, Mat. x. 35. A good man, having his heart furnished with a treasure of many precious truths, bringeth forth good thoughts as well as good things. When thou art walking or riding alone, call to mind some spiritual subject or savoury truth whereon to meditate: bring forth out of thy treasury, and let thy heart be continually working upon those good things, thou hast there laid up.

9. 'So often as thou goest unto God in prayer, let one petition be for mortifying grace,' to conquer those sinful lusts and vile affections, which are apt to steam up into thine head with answerable thoughts: and that he would make thee more heavenly-minded, by working in thine heart better affections. Nothing but the power of God can cure us of the vanity of our thoughts, and make them such as may be acceptable unto him.

In regard that the best of God's people do find great backwardness and outwardness in themselves to the performance of this heavenly duty, I shall give you some motives thereunto, which, if seriously weighed, may, through God's blessing, prove effectual to persuade you to be more spiritually-minded.

I. The first may be taken from the *possibility* of the work. Indeed, the work is somewhat difficult, yet it is *possible;* it is that you have power to do. Though you have not that command of your affections, you cannot love what you will, nor hate what you will; grieve when you will: yet can you not think on what you will? And by how much more able you are to do it, by so much the greater your sin is, if you neglect it.

II. Consider the *necessity* of this duty. The mind of man being active, if it be not exercised on spiritual and holy things, it will be exercised on things earthly and carnal. The truth is, whosoever doth not accustom himself to fix his thoughts on God, or his word, or some spiritual subject, will be sure to find them taken up with things of less concernment, yea, of dangerous and sad consequence; from which they will reap nothing but corruption, and defilement. By how much our minds stray from God, and pitch upon other things, the more will they grow into the form of the devil. 'They have gone far from me, and have walked after vanity, and are become vain,' Jer. ii. 5.

III. Consider the *manifold benefits* which usually follow thereupon.

1. God will be sure to mind them, who mind him. 'Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another, and a book of remembrance was written before him, for them that feared the Lord and thought on his name,' Mal. iii. 16. Not a thought of God but it is registered in his book of remembrance. The more we look up unto God, the more he will look down upon us for our good: When thoughts of God are stirring in us, God himself is not far off, he will come and enter. Oh how happy are those souls in whom God comes, and takes up his habitation!

2. 'A clearer apprehension of divine truths.' Though we hear often, and read much, yet if we digest not those truths we meet with by meditation, we shall still continue in the dark. Our knowledge, at the best, will be but weak and inefficacious. Whereas, by a frequent thinking of those truths which we hear or read, we shall have a clearer apprehension of them, and they will be concocted into better nourishment.

3. 'An heavenly conversation.' The mind being the fountain of actions; such as the mind is, such is the life, and conversation. If the mind be holy and heavenly, such will the life be: But, if the life be carnal and unclean, the conversation will be the same. Wouldst thou have an heavenly conversation? then must thou be heavenly indeed. Thoughts are the seed and conceptions of all our actions; and, such as the seed is, such will be the fruit. As evil thoughts bring forth evil actions; so, heavenly thoughts bring forth an heavenly conversation.

4. 'Readiness to discourse on divine mysteries.' As they who have laid up much riches, have sufficient by them, to bring forth on all occasions: so, such as, by frequent meditations, have treasured up many precious truths, have sufficient by them to produce, for the benefit of those they converse withal. Whereas, others who have spent much time in reading, and hearing, and have not, by meditation, made it their own, we see how barren they are. *I will meditate* saith David, *of all thy works, and talk of thy doings,*

Psal. 17. 12. It is there observable, how good conference follows upon holy meditation.

5. 'Cheerfulness of spirit.' To be much in heaven, by a frequent contemplation of things above, will exceedingly cheer up our spirits and make us walk comfortably. For the proof thereof, I dare appeal to the experience of any heavenly-minded Christian: When is it that your hearts are most cheerful, but when you have been walking with God, and beholding his face, and looking to those things that are within the vail? Certainly, this will leave such a savour upon the heart of a Christian, that he cannot but confess, that one hour thus spent, doth afford more true real joy and sweetness than all the riches and pleasures in the world.

6. Another benefit of divine contemplation, is 'a profitable improvement of time.' For, thereby, all the chinks, and vacuities of our time will be filled up. There need be no vacuity, when we have work that is so proper for every season; yea, and that will whet and quicken us, to whatever work God hath for us to do. The most contemplative Christians are the most active. Our holy thoughts will set us upon our holy work: the thoughtless are usually the most fruitless of men.

7. 'Victory over our lusts and corruptions,' is another benefit of divine contemplation. It is recorded of Noah, that though he lived in wicked and corrupt times, yet he was *a just and upright man*, Gen. vi. The reason thereof is rendered in the next words, *He walked with God;* continually eying him, and meditating on him. By his frequent conversing with God, he kept himself from the iniquities of the times, as well as from the corruptions of his own heart. And, certainly, there is no better preservative against sin, than to have our minds and thoughts thus holily employed about spiritual things. For,

1. By looking into ourselves, and considering their own hearts and ways, we discern the evils that are there: We see such worldliness and covetousness in our hearts, the very sight whereof will make us look the better to ourselves.

2. By spiritual meditation we come to have such an insight into the evil of sin, the vanity of the creature, the folly of sensual delights; that, temptations unto sinful acts will have the less power over us.

3. Divine contemplation is a preservative against sin, because it keeps the heart employed. When the heart is taken up with better things, it hath no leisure to hearken to temptations; no leisure to be lustful and wanton; to be worldly or ambitious. When we are idle and empty of God, we are sure to be pestered with evil thoughts: whilst we are well employed, we are safe. When the vessel is full, you can put in no more. And when the heart is filled with heaven, there is no room for earth and vanity. What

is the reason most men's hearts are so full of wicked, wanton thoughts, but, because God is not in all their thoughts.

4. Divine contemplation is a good preservative against sin, in that our understandings are thereby cleared, to judge rightly of our sinful lust and pleasures. When a Christian hath been seriously musing either on those everlasting joys which are prepared for the godly in heaven; or on those everlasting torments, which are prepared for the wicked in hell, what then are his apprehensions of his lusts and iniquities? Oh how doth he befool himself for them, when he sees what he is like to lose and suffer by them! how could he even tear his very flesh, and take revenge on himself, for his earthly-mindedness, and fleshly pleasures! for his mispent time, that he hath so prodigally lavished, and wofully wasted his golden and precious time, in vanity and pleasure, in sin and wickedness? How verily doth he think there is no man in Bedlam so truly mad, as they, who, for the short fruition of a momentary pleasure, and delight here, do plunge themselves into everlasting burnings in hell, where is nothing but weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth!

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Mortification.

VIII. ANOTHER singular duty incumbent upon the regenerate is, 'To labour in the use of all good means for the mortification of the whole body of sin, with all its affections and lusts, especially those we feel most predominant in us.' True mortification extendeth itself to the whole of sin, body and members, root and branch, even every sinful lust. *Mortify, therefore, your members which are upon the earth*, saith the apostle, Col. iii. 5. Where, by *members on the earth*, are meant the sinful lusts and affections, which are as the members of that monstrous body of sin; which is evident by the particular instances in the words following, namely, *fornication, inordinate affections*, and the like. These must be mortified, that is, killed and destroyed. The regenerate, by the Spirit of God, are enabled, as to restrain the actings of sin, so, by degrees, to deaden the root. Indeed, this is not done to the uttermost while here we live; I mean, sin is not here so mortified and destroyed, that it hath no residence, nor activity in our hearts: yet it may be so weakened and subdued, as to lose its vigour, power and strength, and languish away more and more. Though corruption keep possession in us, after we are regenerate, yet hath it not dominion over us: though we may

be sin's captives, yet shall we not be sin's subjects, to yield a voluntary subjection of ourselves unto the commands of sin.

Q. How may we know when corruption is mortified in us.

A. When it is not only restrained, and kept from ordinary breakings out into actual sins: but the lusts and motions that issue from it, are a grief to us: yea, we hate and detest them, and groan under the burden of them: we watch against them, fight against them, earnestly desiring to be delivered from them, crying out with the apostle, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of sin and corruption?* Rom. vii. 24.

For the more profitable pressing this so necessary and difficult a duty, I shall,

1. Shew you some motives and arguments to enforce the same.
2. Some *means* whereby it may be effected.
3. The *manner* how it ought to be performed.

The *reasons* forcing this work of mortification upon the regenerate are these.

1. After regeneration there remaineth a body of sin and corruption in the best, which, if we endeavour not, by the help of God's Spirit, to mortify and subdue, will gather strength and become mighty, to the great hindrance of our duty, and darkening all our comfort.

2. Corruption doth not only remain in us as long as we live in this world, but it is always in continual work: either stirring us up to evil, or keeping us from that which is good, or defiling our best actions. In which respect, saith the apostle, Gal. v. 17. *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit:* And, from his own experience, he cryeth out, 'I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin, which is in my members; so that I cannot do the good which I would, but rather do the evil which I hate,' Rom. vii. 23. How doth it then concern us, daily and hourly to fight and strive against these lusts which are continually working, and warring in our members, hindering and spoiling all our duties, breaking our peace, undermining all our hopes and comforts, and seeking our lives! We must either kill or be killed.

3. By a conscionable performance of this duty we shall be freed from those heinous and scandalous sins, into which other men's lusts do carry them. Should corruption have its way and course, without resistance, in the best of us; it would soon break forth into the most loathsome and disgraceful sins, that are committed by the very worst of men; as we see in David, Solomon, and others. Is it not then needful for us to keep down, and withstand the first motions and risings of sin in our hearts, before it break forth into such wicked and disgraceful acts, which will blast our credit and reputation, and bring a scandal upon our religion and profession?

4. Mortification of sin was one special end of Christ's death; who died *to save his people from their sins:* not to save them *in* their sins, but *from* their sins: as from the guilt and their punishment, so, from the power of them. And, indeed, when Christ delivers from the damnation of sin, he first delivers also from the dominion of sin. Whom he intends to save from hell, he first saveth them from iniquity: he saves their souls by killing their sins.

If thou findest any lust to remain unmortified in thee, bearing rule in thine heart, and sway in thy life, thou hast just cause to question thy interest in Christ, and his salvation. *They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts*, Gal. v. 24.

II. The *means* whereby the work of mortification may be effected by us, are these,

I. When thou feelest corruption working in thee, and stirring thee up to evil, then call to mind, and lay to heart the ensuing considerations.

1. Consider the *shortness of the pleasure of sin*, with the *length of the punishment* following thereupon, without true and unfeigned repentance: The one, for a *moment;* the other, *everlasting*. The *pleasure* is but *short*, but, the *punishment* is *for ever and ever*. The torments of the damned in hell are intensively most grievous in themselves: but that which mainly and infinitely adds to the greatness of them is, because they are *eternal, they are tormented day and night, for ever and ever*, Rev. xx. 10. The worm is always gnawing, and the fire continually burning, therefore, called *unquenchable fire*, Mat. iii. 12. Oh what a folly must it then needs be, yea, and madness, beyond admiration, for the *short* fruition of these *perishing* pleasures, and *transient* contentment here, to implunge ourselves into *everlasting* burnings?

Oh! how terrible is the thought of *eternity* in those *tormenting* flames! where the damned would think themselves happy, if after they had endured them so many thousand years, as there are sands on the sea-shore, or stars in the firmament, they might then be assured of enlargement. But when all that time is past, and innumerable millions of years, and ages are run out, they are as far from an end, as at their first entrance. Why wilt thou then purchase a little sensual delight at so dear a rate? for a *moment's pleasure* to incur *everlasting woe and misery?* Oh the fire of hell, if thou wouldst send down thy thoughts thither, would burn up thy *lusts*, which, *otherwise*, will be *fuel* to burn thy soul!

2. Consider thy *extreme folly* in gratifying thy sinful lusts: thereby thou hast chosen and preferred thy *fleshly pleasures*, thy *carnal content* before the *glory of God*, the *everlasting joys of heaven*, and the *precious blood of Jesus Christ*. Oh *monstrous madness*, and *unconceivable* folly, at which the angels blush, and heaven and earth cannot but stand amazed!

3. 'Call to mind and consider some of the threatenings in God's word, as against sin in *general*, so against that *particular* lust, which thou findest most working and stirring in thee, and unto which thou findest strongest inclinations in thyself.'

First; to call to mind and consider some of the threatenings against sin and sinners in general. *Upon the wicked*, saith the Psalmist, xi. 6. *God shall reign fire and brimstone and an horrible tempest, this shall be the portion of their cup.* And, saith the apostle, *Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish upon every soul of man that doth evil*, Rom. ii. 8, 9.

Secondly, When thou findest any inclination in thyself to a particular sin, as unto *drunkenness;* seriously consider that of the wiseman, 'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contention? *&c.* They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixt wine,' Prov. xxiii. 29, 30. When thou findest any inclination or temptation unto *uncleanness*, seriously weigh that of the apostle, 'Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, shall inherit the kingdom of God,' 1 Cor. vi. 9. And, again, 'Whoremongers, and adulterers God will judge,' Heb. xiii. 4. When thou findest any inclinations unto *covetousness*, call to mind that of the prophet Isaiah, *Woe unto them that join house to house, and lay field to field, till there be no place*, Isa. v. 8. and that of the Apostle, 'The love of money is the root of all evil, which while some have coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows,' 1 Tim. vi. 10. As God hath in his word denounced severe threatenings against many sins; so, a serious consideration of them will be a special means to mortify the same, and keep them, at least, from reigning in us.

4. 'When thou feelest corruption working and stirring in thee, enticing thee to sin, seriously consider the manifold suffering and bitter death of our blessed Saviour Jesus Christ on the cross, whereof our sins were the cause.' These were they that lay heavy upon his soul, and made him exceeding sorrowful even to the death. These were the thorns that pricked his temples, the whips which scourged his innocent body, and the nails which fastened his hands and feet to the cross. And can we love our sins, which killed our Saviour? we complain of Judas and of the Jews, for crucifying him, and seem to hate them upon that account: but, behold the Judas in thy heart, and in thy life, thy sins, these are the betrayers and murderers.

Oh! never have a looking up to a crucified Christ, till thou feel, and find both arguments enough to engage thy heart against them, and virtue flow from him to the crucifying of them! to this end, reason thus with thyself: Hath Christ paid for my redemption his precious blood; and shall I sell my soul to sin again, for this fleshly pleasure, or base profit? What is this, but to crucify the Lord

of life afresh? For, know assuredly, so many sins as thou committest wittingly and with delight, so many thorns dost thou again fasten upon his head; so many nails dost thou drive into his hands and feet; so many spears dost thou thrust into his heart. Certainly, a serious consideration of these things, cannot but be a special means to set thee heartily upon this work of mortification.

5. 'Consider *how frail and mortal thou art*, subject to death every moment; and woe be unto thee, if thou die before thy sins be slain.' How darest thou adventure upon thy lusts and the pleasures of sin, whereas thou mayest suddenly be taken out of the land of the living, and cast into hell, while thou art acting thy wickedness? Even *then*, when thou art blessing thyself in thy pleasures, or the gains of unrighteousness, thou mayest hear that voice, *Thou fool, this night shall thy soul be taken from thee.* Didst thou but seriously consider, as the *certainty* of thy death, so the *uncertainty* of the *time* thereof, thou wouldst not but be afraid of sinning once more, lest God should strike thee dead in the very act, and thou have no time left for repentance. Oh! pray with the Psalmist, 'That God would teach thee to number thy days; and this will make thee apply thine heart unto wisdom.'

6. 'Consider that sin will be thy destruction, and nothing besides it can harm thee.' It is not in the power of all the men and devils in the world to destroy the soul of any man. Temptations can do nothing but by the advantage of corruption; it is *that* which wounds mortally our immortal spirit, and brings it into that cursed state, where, though it *never dieth*, yet it is *always dying*; though *never quite dead*, yet *ever* in the *pains* of *death*.

Oh what prodigious cruelty must it then needs be, for such *things of nought*, to betray thy *precious soul* to an *eternal loss*: whereas if thou wouldst be persuaded to secure this enemy, sin, thou mightest live and be blessed, in spite of men and devils. And wilt thou yet be in league with it? Wilt thou let it live? Shall not thy soul be avenged of such an enemy as this? Arise, arise, set upon thy sins, upon them all: let not thy soul spare any one of them, give no quarters to them; let not any iniquity lodge in peace with thee one night more, lest thou be a dead man before the morning light.

Thus have I commended to the several considerations to restrain thee from sin, which, by the help of God, may serve to imbitter the sweetest bait that draws thee to it, and to cool the heat of the most furious enticements. When, therefore, thou feelest corruption working and stirring in thee, call to mind the forementioned considerations: fix thy thoughts on them, let them not go off, until they begin to have a powerful influence upon thy soul.

2. Another means on our part to be performed for the mortifying our lusts, is, 'Carefully to eschew all occasions of sin, and

temptations thereunto.' He who will dally with occasions of sin, is in danger of falling. He who will venture upon temptations into wickedness, is not far from the commission of it. Observe, therefore, what occasions, and opportunities, what means and company have, at any time, given advantage to thy lust, to exert and put forth itself, and fly from them as from hell. This is a point of true spiritual wisdom, to see sin afar off in the occasions of it; and by eschewing the one to prevent the other.

3. Observe the first working of corruption in thine heart, and carefully suppress the same, not suffering it to get the least ground; do not say, thus far shall it go, and no farther. Give sin one inch, and it will soon take an ell, as the proverb is. Lustful thoughts have oft-times ended in outward uncleanness, and actual adultery. *From the heart*, saith our Saviour, Mat. xv. 19. *proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornication, &c.* Noting evil thoughts to be the cause of uncleanness in the life. Athalia's massacre of the blood royal, young Joash was hid in the bed-chamber, there he was nurst, and afterwards came to be king, and ruled in the throne, 2 Kings ii. 2, and 12, save any lustful thought, nurse it in the bed-chamber of thy heart, hide it there, and it will, in time, come to be King, and rule over thee.

So soon, therefore, as any lustful or exorbitant thoughts begin to arise in thine heart, speedily reject the same. Quench the fire in the thatch; crush the cockatrice in the egg: stifle the first conception of sin. Certainly, as it is a dangerous neglect, not to observe and embrace the first motions of God's Spirit in us: so, likewise, not to take notice of the first thoughts and rising of sin in our hearts. He who overlooks sinful thoughts, is in a fair way to sinful actions. *They that are Christ's*, saith the Apostle, Gal. v. 24. *have crucified the flesh, with the affections and lusts.* The very affections and lusts of the flesh must be crucified, if we would prevent the works of the flesh.

4. Stir up in thyself an earnest desire to have thy lusts mortified and subdued. The reason why no more is done against sin, is, because we are too well contented to let it alone; when nothing but the death of sin will satisfy thee, thou wilt then use thy weapons, when once thou desirest in earnest the destruction of thine iniquities, there's hope they will not be long-liv'd. For, God hath promised to satisfy the desire of those that fear him, he will hear their groanings, and deliver them, Psalm cxlv. 19.

Come unto me, saith Christ, *all ye who labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you ease and rest*, Mat. xi. 28. Certainly, one special reason why many complain so much of the strength and prevalency of their corruption is, because they are not heartily willing to have them mortified and subdued. They will indeed profess a willingness to part with their sins, that they may be freed from the guilt of them; and punishment due unto them; but

unwilling they are to part with the pleasure they find in them. Thus, Austin acknowledgeth of himself, 'I prayed,' saith he, 'that my sins might be forgiven and mortified; but yet I was afraid, lest my prayer should be heard and answered:' if, therefore, thou wouldest have thy sins mortified indeed, stir up in thyself a willing mind thereunto.

5. Complain unto God of the prevalency of thy lusts, and, by prayer, beg strength from him against the power of them. From God it is that strength must be had, it is his power alone that can support us against the power of sin. And prayer is the only means of obtaining it. This was the course that Paul took, when he was troubled with that *thorn in his flesh*, which expositors generally interpret to be *some strong motions and inclinations in him to some foul sin. For this*, saith the text, *he besought the Lord thrice*, that is, *oftentimes*. And, though he did not presently obtain a full deliverance, yet did he receive strength sufficient to resist them, so that he could not be overcome by them.

If we, in like manner, shall go unto God by prayer for his help, laying open our condition, and complaining to him thereof; we shall for the present, receive strength sufficient to resist, and, in God's due time, deliverance from our iniquities.

6. Act faith in Christ, for the mortifying thy sinful lusts and corruptions. To this end,

1. Be sensible that thou art in thyself weak and unable to grapple with thy lusts. Thou must despair of thine own strength, ere thou shalt take hold on the strength of the Lord. Thou must be beaten out of thy self-confidence, ere thou wilt go unto Christ, when thou seest thou art weak, thou wilt turn to the strong-hold.

2. Believe that Christ is able to succour and help thee; *in him doth all fulness dwell*, Col. i. 19. As he hath a fulness of grace in his heart; so, fulness of power is in his hand, whereby he is able to kill all thine enemies. Sin is mighty, but Christ is *mightier;* the devil is strong, but Christ is *stronger* than he.

3. Believe that Christ is, as able, so, willing, to subdue thine enemies. *Thine* enemies are *his* enemies, and he will have their death: if thou be a *believer;* he hath undertaken for thee. He is thy great *High-priest*, and thy Lord and King; and hereupon, not only by his mercifulness and kindness; but by his office and interest, he stands engaged to pity and relieve thee: he will not be unfaithful to his trust, nor deaf to his own bowels, which plead with him to save and help thee.

4. By faith cast thyself upon Jesus Christ, rest upon his power and goodness for his help and strength. 'Tis here in regard of Christ's power, as in regard of his promises. As our resting and relying upon his promises in a time of danger and distress, makes them our own: so, our resting and relying upon Christ's power for help and support, doth make it our own.

5. By faith wait upon Christ in expectation of relief, and succour against the working and stirring of thy corruption. Though relief come in but slowly from him, yet wait for it, because it will most surely come in the most seasonable time. For, as nothing doth more engage the heart of a man to be helpful to another, than an expectation of help from him: so, certainly the raising up thy heart to an expectation of relief from Christ, must needs be a great engagement unto him to assist thee accordingly.

When Christ cured many, of their bodily diseases and distempers, while he lived upon the earth, we find their cure is still ascribed to their *faith*. Now, *what* was their faith? They believed that Christ was both *able* and *willing* to cure them, and thereupon with confidence, went unto him for cure, and so drew virtue from him accordingly. This you may see in the poor woman, that had an issue of blood twelve years, who came behind Christ, and said, Mat. ix. 20. *If I may but touch the hem of his garment, I shall be whole.* To whom Christ replied. *Daughter, be of good comfort, thy faith hath made thee whole.* This is written, as all other scripture is, for our learning, to teach and instruct us what course to take for the curing of our spiritual maladies and diseases.

Hast thou any issue of worldliness and covetousness; of pride, or forwardness, of passion or envy, or the like, running upon thee? And wouldst thou be cured of them? Do as that poor woman did: Go unto Christ, set thy faith at work on him; believe his *power* and *willingness*, let thy faith touch but the hem of his garment, lay hold on him, cast thyself on his blood and bowels, wait at his door, resolving not to return without a gracious answer, and then see, if this be not his answer, 'Son, be thou of good comfort, thy sins are forgiven, be thou cleansed of all thy corruptions, thy faith hath made thee whole.'

Having shewed the means whereby the work of mortification may be effected: I come now to shew the manner how it ought to be performed.

1. Our mortification must be *speedy*. Begin to-day, let the ax be presently laid to the root of these trees: and whenever you feel the devil at work, blowing up the coals of lust, be instantly in arms, giving not time to sin, to get head upon thee; resist it in its first motions and risings. Delays herein are very dangerous. That lust, which, at *first*, may *easily* be overcome, *afterwards* will *hardly* be *kept under*.

Why should we not be as wise for our souls, as we are for our bodies? Who having fire cast into his bosom or house, will not presently cast it out, and quench it? Woe to those fools, who let alone those hellish fires, and trifle so long, till it hath gotten the mastery! you whose lusts are through your own neglect gotten up into a flame, fear, lest it be too late to quench them: fear lest

these fires having been neglected so long, should now burn to the bottom of hell.

Vain, wicked, wanton thoughts, are evil seeds sown in our hearts, by our adversary the devil; which, if they be let alone, will invisibly grow up first into a blade, then to an ear, and so bring forth a dismal harvest of wickedness and wrath. And, therefore, our wisest course must needs be, so soon as they are sown, speedily to weed, and pull them up by the roots. To which agreeth that of an ancient, *Vitia corporis non sunt sinenda coalescere; sed in exordiis statim enecanda sunt. Hilar. Enarat*, in Psal. xxxvi. 'We must not suffer these fleshly vices to grow and increase, but rather destroy them in their first beginnings.'

2. Our mortification must be *willing* and *voluntary*, not *forced* and *constrained*. The mariner in a storm casteth away his goods, because he dares keep them no longer; yet, still his heart goeth after them. And this is all the mortification of the most, they will cast off their transgressions, because they dare do no other. *Then* only are we sincere in this work, when our hearts are in the first in all that opposition we make against our sins; when we *pray* against them *heartily*, when we *watch*, and *wrestle*, and *strive*, and *resist* them *with all our hearts:* when our very souls *long* to *see the blood* of our lusts; and, if it were possible we might with safety, yet our hatred against them would not suffer them to live. They are like to do something to purpose against sin, whose hearts do give the first charge upon them.

3. Our mortification must be *universal*, extending itself to all our sinful lusts, with a *sincere purpose*, not to bear with ourselves in *any* known sin. For, most certain it is, that true mortification, and an advised remaining in the practice of *any* known sin cannot, possibly stand together. Therefore, the prophet David, to testify the truth of his mortification, saith, Psalm cxix. 101. *I have refrained my feet*, not from one or two, but *from every evil way*, he did not willingly bear with himself in the practice of any one sin; well knowing every sin to be a transgression of the law. These two words, *anomia*, and *hamarita*, *sin* and *transgression* are convertible, *whosoever committeth sin*, saith the beloved disciple John, 1 John iii. 4. *transgresseth the law;* yea, every sin: and so makes us liable to the wrath of God, to all judgments and plagues here, and to eternal damnation hereafter. God will not *spare* that soul, that will have *one* of his *sins spared* to him. He that would have *one* sin spared, would have *another*, and *another*, if it served his turn. He that would not have *all* of Christ, would, in truth, have *none* of him. And, he that would not be rid of *all* sin, has no sincere mind to be rid of *any*.

Christ will have *all* or *nothing; every* duty must be done, or as good you did *none; every* sin must be left, or as good you kept them *all*. Canst thou let all sin go but *this one?* even *this* must

go too, or thy *life* must go for *it*. O friend, set thyself against *every* sin, *great* and *small*, *open* and *secret*, *carnal* and *spiritual!* set thyself against them *heartily*, be willing to *prosper* and *overcome!* and set upon them *speedily*, let no iniquity live *a day longer*, nor sleep a *night more* in *quiet* with thee (only remembering to go forth against them in the *strength* of the *Lord*) and then, we shall quickly find thee to be one of Christ's mortified ones, who, as thou art dead with Christ, shall certainly live with Christ, and reign with Christ to all eternity.

CHRISTIAN DIRECTIONS;

SHEWING,

How to walk with GOD all the Day long.

CHAP. I.

How to begin the Day with GOD.

IN regard it conduceth much to the practice of an holy life, to know the ordinary course and method of our duties; I shall therefore begin with those which are first to be performed by us.

I. At thy first awaking in the morning, consecrate unto God the freshest of thy thoughts, by lifting up thine heart to him in praises and thanksgivings, for the comfortable rest and refreshment he hath vouchsafed unto thee the night past. For, had not the Lord been the more gracious unto thee, thou mightest have slept the sleep of death; yea, thou mightest have awaked with hell-flames about thine ears. What cause hast thou therefore to bless God, as for the mercies of the night, so for the renewing of his mercies with the day? And then heartily beg of God, to keep thee as from all dangers that day, so especially from sinning against him; as also, to direct, assist, and bless thee in all thy lawful undertakings.

II. Having thus consecrated thy first awaking unto God, then let out thine heart in a serious meditation of God, of some or other of his glorious attributes;

1. 'Of his infinite purity, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity,' with the least approbation: but hates all sin with a perfect hatred, as being contrary to his nature. A serious consideration whereof would, through God's blessing, prove very effectual for the suppressing of those worldly and impure thoughts, which are apt to arise from thy corrupt heart.

2. 'Of the Almighty power of God,' whereby he is able to supply all thy wants, to support thee under all thy trials and temptations, to carry thee through all thy undertakings.

3. 'Of God's continual presence about thee, and with thee, wheresoever thou art, and whatsoever thou dost: for he is about thy bed, and thy path, Psalm cxxxix. 3.' and taketh notice of all thy actions, and when no man seeth thee, yet he seeth thee; before whose tribunal thou must one day stand to give an account of all thy actions. Surely it would be a special preservative against sin, and a singular means to make thee watchful over all thy ways

and actions, if thou didst seriously consider God's all-seeing presence about thee.

4. 'Of the omnisciency of God,' how he knoweth all things, even the secret thoughts of thine heart, and the inward intentions of thy mind, *before whom all things are naked and open*, Heb. iv. 13. Not an ambitious worldly lustful thought in thine heart, but God is privy to it; yea, *and will bring every secret thing into judgment*, Eccles. xii. 14. This, if it were seriously considered, how would it make thee watchful over thy very heart! and careful to suppress all wicked lustful thoughts at their first rising, and to keep thee upright and sincere in what thou dost; especially in the duties of God's worship and service, as knowing there is no dissembling before him.

III. 'Call to mind what sin it is whereunto thou findest thyself most propense,' and furnish thyself with the strongest arguments thou canst against it, and then bring up thine heart to a firm resolution, as against that sin, so against the occasions and allurements thereunto.

IV. 'As thou art rising out of thy bed, take all occasions of holy and heavenly meditations:' To give thee some hints:

1. 'When thou seest the nakedness of thy body, let that mind thee of thy sins, which caused thee first to be ashamed of it.' For our first parents before they had sinned, were not ashamed of their nakedness, Gen. ii. 25. And how should the consideration thereof stir thee up earnestly to long after the robe of Christ's righteousness, to be clothed therewith? which will make thee lovely and amiable in the sight of God.

2. 'Let thy rising out of thy bed mind thee, as of a resurrection from the death of sin unto the life of grace here, so likewise of the resurrection of thy body out of the grave into eternal life at the last day;' when thou and every one of us must appear before the great Judge, to give an account of whatsoever we have done here.

3. 'Let the light of the day mind thee of Jesus Christ;' who is often in scripture termed *light*, yea, the *true light*.

4. 'When thou art putting on thine apparel, let out thine heart in a serious meditation of the robe of Christ's righteousness.' And by faith apply Christ and his righteousness unto thyself, resting and relying thereupon, for the pardon and forgiveness of thy sins here, and for eternal salvation hereafter.

For motives to quicken thee to a conscionable use of these forementioned directions.

1. 'This will be a special means to keep out worldly, wanton and impure thoughts out of thine heart;' so that either they will not dare to come in, or shall the easier be kept out.

2. 'Hereby thine heart will be exceedingly fenced, and guard-

ed against the suggestions of Satan,' who otherwise will not be wanting to cast his hellish fire-brands into thy soul.

3. 'Good and holy thoughts first let into the heart of a Christian, will keep it in a better tune all the day after.'

Object. Haply, some will object, That to put in practice these Rules and Directions, will take up too much time, even more than their callings and employments will afford.

Ans. 1. True it is, some men's callings and employments, do not afford them so much time as others do; yet there is none but may find some time for spiritual and heavenly meditations, if it be but in their rising out of their beds, and putting on their clothes.

2. If thou hast not time to put in practice all these directions, at least thou mayest go over some few of them: yea, I shall give thee this as my special advice, if thou art straitened in time, rather to fix upon one or two at one time, than in an overly and perfunctory manner, to ramble over them all every morning.

Thus much of morning meditation.

CHAP. II.

Of Secret Prayer in the Morning.

SO soon as thou get up, go into thy closet, or into some private place, and there offer up unto God a morning sacrifice of praise and thanksgiving; let any thing be omitted rather than that: If thy business be urgent and great, rise the sooner, dare not to attempt any thing, till thou has commended thyself, and thine affairs unto God by prayer. And indeed, how canst thou with any confidence expect God's blessing upon thy pains and endeavours without it? It being the means sanctified by God for the obtaining his blessing. If thou take any liberty to omit this duty, the devil will so work upon thee, that by little and little thou wilt wax weary of it, if God's grace be not the more powerful in thee.

The morning is the fittest time for this duty of secret prayer, men being then freshest and freest from worldly business and distractions. We have a saying among us, *Aurora musis amica*, 'the morning is a friend to the muses,' as being the best time for study: I am sure, it is as true, that the morning is a friend to the graces, as being the best time for any holy service.

Reason and experience teach us, that in the morning our memories and senses are the quickest, and all the faculties of our souls at their best, having recovered fresh strength through the sweet sleep and comfortable rest we had the night past: And in the morning the sooner the better; for, if thou shalt enter upon any worldly business or discourse, before thou hast offered up thy morning

sacrifice, thou shalt find it much harder to keep the world out of thine head, and thine heart close unto the duty. But if some extraordinary business have occasioned thee to delay it, do not thereupon wholly omit it, but be careful to take the first opportunity of retiring into some secret place, there to offer up thy morning sacrifice unto God.

This duty of secret prayer, is both commanded and commended to us in the work of God.

1. It is expressly commanded by our Lord and Saviour, Mat. vi. 6. 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.'

Our Saviour having in the foregoing *verse*, reproved the Scribes and Pharisees for their vain-glorious manner of praying in the synagogues and streets that they might be seen of men: in this *verse*, He commands his disciples to withdraw themselves out of the view of men, into some secret place, and there having shut the door, to offer up the sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God their heavenly Father.

The reason followeth in these words, *Thy Father which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly.* Wherein is declared,

1. The notice that God taketh of our most secret prayers, *He seeth them:* though God himself be invisible to all, yet nothing is invisible unto him.

2. The account that he maketh of them, is in these words, *He will reward thee openly.* Such account God maketh of the secret prayers of his servants, that he will give not only what they ask, but reward them for their asking.

II. We find secret prayer in the morning especially *commended to us.*

1. By the example of Christ himself, of whom it is recorded by Saint Mark, chap. i. 35. *That early in the morning he was praying alone in a secret place.*

2. By the practice of the saints of God therein. It is recorded of Job, *that he rose early in the morning, and offered burnt-offerings before the Lord,* Job i. 5. He gave unto God the first-fruits of the day. And David's morning devotions are often expressed in the book of Psalms, as, Psal. v. 3. 'My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayers unto thee, I will look up.' And it is recorded of Daniel, chap. vi. 10. that *three times a day he kneeled upon his knees, and prayed, and gave thanks:* In the morning, before he entered upon any business: At noon, before he went to his dinner, and in the evening, before he went to bed, and that this was his usual practice, appears from the following expression, *as he did aforetime;* that is, he prayed three times a day, as he was formerly accustomed to do.

By these instances (to which many more might be added) you

may see that it hath been the practice of God's people in former ages, to make conscience of praying in secret, and particularly in the morning. Oh, how should their example stir us up to a constant and conscionable performance thereof! For, certainly, their practice is left upon record, for our learning and imitation.

For the more profitable pressing this duty of *secret prayer*,

1. I shall give you some *motives* to quicken you up to a conscionable performance thereof.

2. Give you some *directions* for the right manner of performing it.

3. Answer some questions and objections.

The motives may be drawn to three heads.

1. The *Excellency*. 2. The *Necessity*. 3. The *Utility* thereof.

1. The *Excellency* of secret prayer appeareth in these particulars,

1. In that we do hereby highly honour God, and exalt his great name, and glorious attributes; for thereby we acknowledge God to be,

1. *Omnipresent;* present in all places, in the secret closet, as well as in the public church.

2. *Omniscient;* that he knows and takes notice of what is done in our most secret retirement, of our sighs and tears, that are poured out before him in our closets.

3. *Omnipotent;* able to supply all our wants, to strengthen us in all our weakness, to support us under all our trials and temptations.

2. The *Excellency* of secret prayer appeareth, in that the faithful therein enjoy most sweet communion with God. In public prayers, there is more communion with saints; but in secret prayers, there is oft more communion with God. Certainly none have more experienced the grace and goodness of God, in cheering and comforting their hearts with the assurance of his love, and in melting and breaking their hearts for their sins, than they who are most constant in their secret devotions. When Daniel was praying alone in secret, it was said to him, *Thou art greatly beloved*, Daniel ix. 20, 23.

3. The *Excellency* of secret prayer appeareth, in that therein, as the saints ordinarily enjoy the sweetest communion with God; so also the freest and fullest communication from God. Therein he more freely unbosoms himself unto them, and discovers such secrets as are not fit for others to know. The more they withdraw themselves from men into a secret corner, the more the Lord unvails his face, and discovers his love unto them. There are none on earth, who know so much of the secrets of God's love, of the secrets of his counsels, and the secrets of his heart, as they who most delight to draw near unto him in secret. Oh, the sweet embraces that are oftentimes betwixt God and a praying saint! Oh, the gracious discoveries that God makes of himself to a soul in

secret! And Oh, the glorious manifestations of his love, which many Christians have felt in their secret addresses! When we are upon our knees in a corner, then the Lord looks upon us with singular delight and complacency, and with special intimations of his love and favour: Yea, then it is, that we often feel and find soul-ravishing incomes from his Spirit. How highly then doth it concern us, to be much with God in secret?

II. Another motive may be taken from the *necessity* of secret prayer, which appeareth,

1. 'From the consideration of the manifold secret sins of which every one stands guilty,' which are not fit to be laid open before others, but to be confessed in secret, between God and a man's own conscience.

2. 'From the consideration of the manifold secret temptations whereunto we are subject from our adversary the devil,' who, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour. He sits not still, but is restless to do all the mischief he can; and is ever seeking all advantages against us. If he find us abroad, before we have been with God in secret prayer, we are in great danger to be insnared and foiled by him. S. Origen going forth one morning out of his house, before he had performed his secret devotions, met with a sad disaster. For, being apprehended by some who constrained him either to offer sacrifice to an idol, or to suffer his body most unnaturally to be abused by a *blackamoor*; he chose the former; but, afterwards, reflecting upon what he had done, and searching out the cause hereof, what it was that had provoked God to suffer him to fall into such wicked hands, who drew him into so foul a sin, he called to mind how he had that morning omitted his secret devotions, and thereupon acknowledged God's justice therein.

3. The necessity of secret prayer appeareth from the consideration 'of the manifold casualties whereunto we are subject.' For, death lieth every where in wait for us, so that we go every moment in danger of our lives. Yea, how many have risen well in the morning, who have been found dead before the evening? Oh how sad a thing will it be to be arrested by death, and called to the bar of God's judgment to plead guilty, or not guilty, before we have presented ourselves at the throne of grace to sue forth our pardon.

III. Another motive may be taken from 'the utility and profit that attends a conscientious discharge of this duty;' which is manifold.

1. 'Secret prayer is one effectual, if not the principal means, whereby we attain, at the hands of God, all the good things whereof we stand in need.' It is the *privy-key* whereby we open the treasury of all God's blessings, as well spiritual, as temporal: if thou art assaulted by Satan, and fearest lest thou shouldst be

overcome by his temptations, thou mayest (by wrestling with God in secret) obtain, if not present deliverance, yet grace sufficient to resist them, and power at last to overcome them. If thou feelest any lust, any corruption working and stirring in thee, and fearest lest it should get the victory over thee, thou mayest, by this means, obtain so much power and strength against it, that it shall not have dominion over thee: Lust, as strong as it is, will not be able to stand before secret prayer, if it be fervent: only be careful that when thou hast prayed, thou set a watch: And certainly, one special reason, why many Christians go so long complaining of the working and stirring, yea, of the power and prevalency of their corruptions, is, because they do not so often as they should, wrestle with God in secret, for power against it. This is an experienced truth, that, the more frequent and fervent any Christian is in his closet prayers, the less power will sin have over him.

2. 'It is a special means to preserve a Christian from public judgments in time of common calamity.' God usually takes them into the chamber of his protection, who frequently betake themselves into their chambers of devotion, and there bewail the sins of the times and places in which they live, Ezek. ix. 4. we read, how they, who prayed and mourned in secret for the abominations which were done in the midst of the city, had a mark of *safety* set upon their fore-heads; whereby they were preserved from the general destruction: As, therefore, thou wouldst be kept safe in a time of common judgment, be much with God in secret, bewailing the sins and iniquities of the times.

3. 'It is a special means to keep up the life of grace and power of godliness in men's hearts and lives.' We are not ignorant, that our bodies will decay, if they be not daily refreshed with food: And so, will the graces of God's Spirit in us, if they be not daily repaired and sustained, by our constant, and fervent addressing ourselves unto God in secret.

4. 'Secret prayer *constantly* and *conscientiously* performed, will evidence the truth and sincerity of grace in thee.' He is an *Israelite indeed*, I mean, a sincere Christian, that delights to converse with God in secret; a man may go to the public congregation, and join in family-prayer, merely in hypocrisy, to gain the applause and commendation of men, to be accounted religious; but he who maketh conscience of praying in secret, where none seeth but his heavenly Father, questionless hath an honest heart, desirous to approve himself unto God, rather than unto men: If, therefore, thou contentedst thyself with frequenting the public prayers in the church, and the private prayers in the family, but makest no conscience of praying in secret, thou hast just cause to suspect thine hollow and hypocritical heart. Acts ix. 11. it is brought as a convincing argument of the reality of Paul's conversion from a *persecutor*, to be a *professor*, a chosen vessel unto Christ, *Behold he*

prayeth. And indeed, it is an inseparable property of all true saints in all places of the world, to make conscience of secret prayer: Though all that pray in secret are not God's true saints; yet, all the true saints of God do make conscience of praying in secret; Psal. xxxii. 6. *For this shall every one that is godly pray unto thee.* Every one that is godly doth, and will pray unto God. As a child, so soon as it is born, usually crieth, and is known to be alive thereby: In like manner, a christian, so soon as he is *new-born*, crieth, *Abba Father*, and is thereby known to have a spiritual life. Yea, as there is no surer evidence of a *graceless soul*, than that it is *prayerless;* so there is no surer sign of a *gracious soul*, than that it is *given to prayer:* For, a *Spirit of grace*, and a *Spirit of supplication* go together: As, Zech. xii. 10. *I will pour upon you*, saith the Lord, *the Spirit of grace and supplication;* implying, that to whomsoever God giveth *grace*, to them he also giveth a *Spirit of supplication*, and enables them not only to pray, but to pray *in the Spirit.* So that our vocation of God follows God's vocation to us.

I grant indeed, that many of God's own children, who have the work of grace wrought in their hearts, cannot express themselves in such apt words and phrases, and in such manner and form, as they desire, and as they hear others do. But, know, that the work of the Spirit, consisteth not so much, in the expression of words and phrases; as in the intention of the heart, and earnestness of affection, wherein the very form and life of true prayer consisteth.

Thus have I given you several motives and arguments to persuade you to the performance of this too, too much neglected duty of secret prayer: What now remaineth, but that we should all fall close to the constant practice thereof. What, though by reason of the flesh, and corruption in us, we find a backwardness thereunto, and are thereupon loath to set upon the work, will not sweet communion with God abundantly recompence all our pains therein? Did ever any repent of their seeking God in secret, especially, if they sought him in *truth* and *sincerity?* Enquire of those who are constant and conscientious, therein, they will tell you, they never found such discoveries and manifestations of God's love, such ravishing incomes of his Spirit, as in their secret retirements. O that I could stir up all of all sorts, husbands, and wives, parents and children, masters and servants, to a conscientious performance of this duty; and to hold up their communion with God in secret; wherein our blessed Saviour hath gone before us, and made himself a pattern and example unto us. And, shall we not be followers of him, when the very life of a Christian doth chiefly consist in his *conformity* to *Christ.*

Having, as I hope, prevailed with you to set upon the duty of *secret prayer;* that you may be instructed to perform it in such a manner as it may be acceptable and pleasing unto God, and beneficial to your own souls, I shall hint unto you some few *directions.*

I. 'Set thyself as in the sight and presence of God;' know that when thou art out of the sight of men, God is present with thee, and observeth thy whole carriage in the duty; yea, not only thine outward gesture and behaviour, but the inward motions of thine heart; he is privy to every wandering and distracted thought in prayer.

II. 'Set upon the duty with the greatest reverence of God that possibly thou canst.' To that end, seriously weigh and consider his surpassing excellencies, by reason whereof the blessed angels are unworthy to stand before him; and, therefore, are said, in scripture, to adore *him* with *covered faces*, as not able to *behold* his most gracious Majesty. We find it usual with the saints, whose prayers are recorded in scripture, to be ample in setting forth the glorious properties of God in the beginning of their prayers. For which purpose, note the prayer of Solomon, 1 Kings viii. 23. of Hezekiah, in 2 Kings xii. 5. of Daniel, chap. ix. 4.

III. 'Beg the gracious assistance of God's Spirit, which helpeth our infirmities, and teacheth us to pray as we ought;' who is therefore called *the Spirit of grace and supplication*, Zech. xix. 11.

IV. 'Put up all thy requests in the name of Christ, John xvi. 23. 'Verily, verily, I say unto you,' saith our Saviour, 'whatsoever you shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you.

To pray in the name of Christ, is,

1. 'To set upon the duty in confidence of assistance from Christ, without whom we can do nothing,' John xv. 5.

2. 'To set upon the duty in confidence of acceptance, both of our persons and services, in and through the worthiness of his merits, and efficacy of his intercession.' Plutarch, in the life of Themistocles, reports of some of the heathens, the Molossians by name, that when they had any matter of consequence to ask of their king, they would get his son, the young prince, into their arms, and so make their requests unto him. The like course should we take, when we have any request to make unto the King of kings, carry Christ with us in the arms of our faith; and so we shall not need to doubt of audience and acceptance. God is so well pleased with his beloved Son, that he likewise will be pleased with all who humbly come unto him in his name, and will deny them nothing, which he knoweth to be good for them.

V. 'Labour to get thine heart unto the duty, and to keep it close thereunto:' which is the main thing that God looketh after in all our addresses to him. Though thy prayers be never so well framed, in regard of words, and is reverently performed as to thy external gestures; yet all is nothing, if thy heart be not in the duty. For praying is not a work of the head, or hand, or eyes only, but chiefly a work of the *heart;* and therefore called, in scripture, *the pouring out of the soul*, 1 Sam. i. 15. and, *the pour-*

ing out of the heart, Psal. lxii. 8. And, indeed, the very soul of prayer lieth in the pouring out of the soul before the Lord. Whensoever, therefore, thou drawest near unto God in prayer, let it be with thine heart and soul, otherwise thou canst have no assurance of audience, and acceptance; for, as Cyprian speaketh, *Quomodo te audiri a Deo postulas, &c.* 'How canst thou expect the Lord should hear thee, when thou hearest not thyself? or that he should regard thy prayers, when thou regardest not what thou prayest?' Certainly that prayer reacheth not the heart of God, which reacheth not our own.

VI. 'In all thy addresses unto God, labour to keep away, and drive out all wandering heterogenial thoughts that come in to thy disturbance. I grant it is impossible wholly to prevent them, yet must thou put forth thine utmost care and endeavour to hinder the prevalency of them: to that end, beware of nourishing them in thine heart with delight. Though roving thoughts, as birds, will hover about thee in the performance of holy duties, yet suffer them not to lodge and nestle in thee, but, with hatred and detestation, presently drive them away.

For thy better help therein, take these few directions.

1. 'When thou art drawing near unto God in prayer, strive to cast the world and worldly things out of thine heart: Consecrate thyself entirely unto him for that time, as one that hath nothing to do with any thing, but to enjoy communion with God in that ordinance.

2. 'Beg of God, that he would, by the assistance of his holy Spirit, restrain all vain and wandering imaginations; that he would whip out of thy soul those thievish thoughts, which are like buyers and sellers, and money-changers in the temple of thy heart; and that, by his Spirit, he would keep thy mind so fixed on the business thou art about, that it may not be distracted with other cogitations, either sinful or impertinent.

3. 'In the confession of thy sins unto God, with grief of heart acknowledge thy manifold roving thoughts in prayer.' How, when thou hast been speaking unto God, thou hast been thinking of the world, and of thy lusts; and so hast often gone *from* God, *without* God, from the ordinances of God, without enjoying communion with God in his ordinances; hereby thou wilt obtain both the pardon of the sins of thy holy services, as also freedom from them, in great measure. For the truth is, a frequent confession of a sin will make a man ashamed thereof, and more watchful over himself, that he fall not into the same sin again. This is implied in 1 John i. 9. 'If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.' See how both these follow upon our confession, God is thereby moved, not only to forgive us our sins past, but to cleanse us also, and to keep us for the future from falling into the same.

4. 'Keep thy mind and heart intent upon the duty of prayer.' He that is intent with all his might in God's service, can find no leisure to hearken to the suggestions of Satan, or parley with the world. So that, the more serious a man is in prayer, the less will he be troubled with wandering thoughts.

5. 'Consider the folly of those prayers which are accompanied with impertinent and distracted thoughts,' in that there is as much time spent in them, as in the most serious and fervent prayers, yet are they altogether fruitless and unprofitable; for, both time is lost, and the duty lost, and our souls too in danger to be lost after all.

6. 'Accustom thyself to holy thoughts and savoury discourses in thy daily conversation,' and thereby thou wilt find thy heart in a fitter frame for prayer, and less subject to roving thoughts therein. Shouldest thou inure thyself to vain wanton thoughts and frothy discourses at other times, they will thereby become so familiar to thee, that they will be sure to accompany thee in thy most holy services, and not easily to be kept out, or cast off at such a time.

Another special help to keep thy mind from roving after other matters, when thou art conversing with God in secret prayers, is, to chuse thy voice so as to hear thyself where and when it may conveniently be done without ostentation.

7. But if notwithstanding that, in praying, thy mind and heart hath been sometimes taken up and possessed with vain thoughts and distractions, it will be a good course in thy secret prayers to repeat that again, which so coldly and carelessly passed from thee; labouring in thy repetition to repel all wandering thoughts, and to pour forth those petitions again after a more hearty manner.

1. By this means thy prayers at length will be performed with greater attention of mind and intention of spirit, and so prove more effectual for the obtaining thy desires.

2. By imposing this task upon thyself, thou wilt become more wary, and watchful over thy thoughts, lest otherwise, thou be inforced to continue long at that exercise, unto which, through the depravation of thy nature, thou art so backward and averse.

8. Under weakness of performance, ever have an eye unto Christ, who now sits at God's right-hand, and having perfumed our prayers with the sweet incense of his merits, presenteth them unto his Father, and makes intercession for them. As it is no strength in our prayers that can make them meritorious with God; so, it is no weakness nor distractions in them, that we sincerely are humbled for, and strive against, can cause God to reject them, if we present them in the name of Christ, and cast ourselves and prayers upon him. And, know, for thy comfort, that if thou didst cordially resist and mourn for thy manifold distractions in

prayer, they will rather move God's pity to thee, than wrath against thee.

VII. 'Pray with all thy strength, put forth the whole man in thee, with all the powers and faculties of thy soul.' Though thy strength be but weakness, yet if thy strength be in the duty, it will find acceptance with God. Indeed, if a man have a male in his flock, and yet offer to the Lord, a corrupt thing; I mean, if he have strength and activity for the following of worldly business, but hath no strength for God's service, but thinks, to put him off, with weak cold formal devotions, what can he expect but a curse instead of a blessing? Mal. i. 14.

VIII. 'Labour to live suitably to thy prayers.' It is to no purpose to begin the day with God, and to keep the devil company all the day after; to be a saint in the morning, and a swine all the day following. Having prayed against sin, be sure thou set a watch against it, avoiding the occasions and temptations thereunto; for, it is impossible to avoid any sin, if we shun not the occasions and temptations thereunto. Having prayed for holiness of life, labor to live holily. Having prayed for humility labour to walk humbly. Having prayed for sobriety and temperance, labour to live soberly and temperately. Having prayed in the Spirit, labour to walk in the Spirit; for, to pray in the Spirit, and to walk in the flesh, is a contradiction. The whole course of a Christian's life should savour of his prayers. He who hath all his religion in his prayers, hath indeed no religion at all.

IX. Lastly, having prayed, look back upon thy prayers, and let the consideration of the manifold weaknesses and distractions, which have accompanied them, drive thee unto Christ. As this is one chief end why God suffers corruption to remain in his children, even after their regeneration, and to have an influence into all their holy services, so it is the use we should make thereof. And, therefore, so often as thou findest thine heart dead and dull, and thy mind distracted with wandering thoughts in prayer, say with thyself, 'Lord, what need have I of a Saviour! I see thou mayest condemn me for my best services, therefore, with a disclaiming of all my own righteousness as filthy rags, I expect life and salvation solely upon the account of the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and by the merits of his death and passion.'

I shall close this discourse with answering a few Questions and Answers.

1. *Q.* How often should we pray unto God?

1. *A.* Every day. For, first, our Saviour hath intimated so much unto us in his plat-form for prayer, by teaching us to pray for *our daily bread;* that is, bread needful for the present day. And in regard we *daily* stand in need of bread; therefore, our Saviour would have us pray *daily* for the same.

2. Have you not daily wants to be supplied? Wants for your-

selves, and wants for your children and servants? Have you not daily infirmities, both in yourselves and families to be healed? Are you not daily subject to dangers and temptations: and do not you daily sin against God? Is it not necessary then, that you daily pray unto God for the supply of all your wants, for the healing of all your infirmities, for the preventing the dangers you are daily subject unto, for the strengthening you against all your temptations, for the pardoning of all your sins? Surely our daily wants, our daily infirmities, our daily dangers, our daily temptations, and our daily sins, do all call upon us daily for prayers.

2. *Q.* How often in each day are we bound to pray?

2. *A.* Twice at least; namely, Morning and Evening. This is commended unto us by the morning and evening sacrifice under the law, which we find given in command unto the Jews, Exod. xxix. 38, 39. And are not Christians under the gospel, as well as those under the law, obliged to offer up their morning and evening sacrifice? The day must be begun with our prayers, and ended with them. We must begin the day with prayer, to crave a blessing at God's hand upon those things which we take in hand. For, can any Christian expect God's blessing upon his pains and endeavours without prayer? And we must end the day with God, to crave pardon for the sins committed in the former part thereof; and to give him thanks as for his manifold favours and blessings, so, especially, for the mercies of the day: and also to commend ourselves to God the night following. How dare any lie down in their beds, before they have, by prayer, commended themselves unto God, and begged the pardon of their sins? Certainly, it were less danger to lie in a bed of snakes, than to lie down in our feather beds with our sins unpardoned: for, if God should take us out of the world that night, how sad would our case be? haply we might awake with hell-flames about our ears. Therefore, let us not fail, before we go into our beds, to offer up our evening sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God.

3. *Q.* What time in the morning and evening is fittest for the performance of secret prayer?

A. For this no certain rule can be prescribed, in regard of the several occasions which may fall out, and by reason of age, sickness, and the like, in the persons praying. But it were to be wished, that the *morning sacrifice* (if possibly) may be betimes in the morning, that our secret devotions may be performed so soon as we are ready, before we fall upon any worldly business: for otherwise, we shall find it much harder to keep the world out of our heads, and our hearts close unto the duty; and indeed, the sooner, the better: for, both reason and experience do teach us, that in the morning our memories and senses are the quickest, and all the faculties of our souls at their best: and, it were to be wished, that the *evening sacrifice* may be before supper, in regard, that

afterwards we are generally more heavy and sleepy, and will find it more difficult to keep our hearts and spirits in the duty.

Having thus resolved the Questions, come we now to the objections raised by divers, both against secret and family prayer.

Obj. 1. Some are apt to object and say, They are convinced of the necessity of praying in secret, but they are altogether unable, they know not how to perform it.

Answ. I would advise such, rather to read some set-form of prayer, than altogether to omit the duty; to use crutches till they are able to go alone; only do not content yourselves therewith, but labour in your own words to pour out your souls unto God in prayer. For your better help therein, take these directions.

1. Carefully observe the prayers of others, their order and method.

2. Study thine own heart, look back into thy life, call to mind thy sins past, with the aggravating circumstances of them: And, withal, consider thy spiritual wants, and take notice of the particular blessings God bestoweth on thee; and put thyself upon the duty of prayer. Confess thy sins unto God, beg the pardon of them, be earnest for such graces as thou standest in need of; likewise, bless God for his manifold mercies, and forget not to implore the assistance of his Spirit to enable thee to the duty. By using and exercising that small ability to pray, which thou hast, thou shalt increase it, and grow more able to do it with comfort. Haply, thou canst not pray with such apt words and expressions as some others do, but let not that discourage thee, God regards not so much the expressions of thy tongue, as the sincerity of thine heart, and earnestness of affections.

Obj. 2. Others object and say, The house in which I live is so small, and so full, that I cannot find any convenient place to retire into.

Answ. 1. Thou canst find a place to commit sin so secretly, that none can see thee, and hadst thou as great a desire to pray in secret, thou wouldst find a convenient place for the same.

2. Though thou canst not find a convenient place in the house, yet is there no out-house, nor garden, nor field, into which thou mayest withdraw thyself? Isaac, we read, went out into the field, to meditate and pray; Peter, to the top of the house; and, certainly, didst thou take delight in conversing with God in secret, thou wouldst find some convenient place, either within doors, or without.

Obj. 3. Others plead the multitude of their businesses, as an excuse sometimes to put off the duty of prayer.

Answ. 1. The more and greater thy businesses are, the more and greater need thou hast of prayer, for the obtaining God's blessing thereon; without which, all thy pains and endeavours may signify little, yea, prove successless. Assure thyself, that the

time spent in praying will prove no lett, but rather a great furtherance to thy business. O that such worldlings would seriously consider that expression of our Saviour, Mark viii. 36. 'What shall it profit a man, to gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?'

2. Dost thou put off prayer for the multitude of worldly businesses, thereby to encrease thy wealth? Know, that the wealth is cursed which is thus gotten: that substance which is the *price of prayer*, (may for aught thou knowest) be the *price of blood.*

3. What business canst thou have of greater importance, than the glorifying of God, and saving of thy soul? For shame then, let not these things, which concern thy spiritual estate here, and everlasting happiness hereafter; give way to thy worldly businesses; rather borrow time from them than omit that necessary duty of prayer.

CHAP. III.

Of Ejaculatory Prayer.

BESIDES thy solemn morning prayer; it will be good to send up ejaculatory prayers, and praises unto God, and that frequently upon all occasions.

By ejaculatory prayers, and praises, I mean, the sudden lifting up of thine heart unto God upon some present occasion, either in way of petition, or thanksgiving.

Which kind of praying, we find commanded under those general precepts of, *Praying always*, and *praying without ceasing*, Luke xviii. 1. 1 Thess. v. 17. The meaning whereof is not, that thou shouldst wholly and only attend on prayer, so as to neglect the word, and other duties of piety, or the ordinary works of thy calling; but that besides thine ordinary and set-times of prayer, thou shouldst have a praying-frame of spirit, be ready upon all occasions to lift up thine heart unto God in some short ejaculations. And, therefore, it is observable, that in Eph. vi. 18. where the Apostle adviseth to pray always; in the original it is not *en panti chrono*, in every particular time, but *en panti carto*, *in every fit season;* that is, when any just occasion or opportunity is offered and so often as the Spirit of God moveth.

For the more profitable pressing of this kind of prayer I shall,

1. Give you some motives, to quicken you up to a frequent performance thereof.

2. Add some cautions.

The motives may be taken, first, from the *necessity* of these ejaculatory prayers, and that,

1. In regard of the sudden dangers and plunges whereunto the

people of God are many times brought, which will not afford time for continued prayer.

2. In regard of the manifold slips and infirmities of the people of God, which put them upon praying for the pardon and forgiveness of them. So soon as David came to a sight and sense of his sin, in numbering of the people, he presently breaks forth into this ejaculatory prayer, 'I have sinned greatly in that I have done; and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly,' 2 Sam.

3. In regard of the frequent working and stirring of corruption in the hearts of God's children. Many wanton lustful thoughts, many atheistical and blasphemous thoughts are apt to arise in their hearts, which call for their sudden ejaculatory prayers to God for power and strength, for the suppressing and keeping them down: and, indeed, they are often found very effectual for the quenching of lustful thoughts, and for the driving away atheistical and blasphemous thoughts out of the heart.

4. In regard of the manifold mercies, blessings and deliverances, which unexpectedly we receive from God; there is a frequent occasion of ejaculatory praises and thanksgiving unto him: and also, for many remarkable passages of his providence towards us, in ordering things most fitly and seasonably for our good, even beyond our expectation: and, also, for God's blessing upon us, in our ordinary businesses, and employments.

II. A second motive may be taken from the *utility* of ejaculatory prayers, which appeareth.

1. 'From God's gracious acception, and remuneration of the same, whereof the scripture giveth abundant instances, and examples;' as, of David's ejaculatory prayer against *Ahithophel*, That God would turn his counsel into foolishness, was graciously accepted, and granted, in defeating the same, 2 Sam. xvii. 14. The like we read of Nehemiah's ejaculatory prayer unto God, to incline the heart of the king to grant his request; which was graciously heard, and answered: so also, the poor penitent thief's ejaculatory prayer unto Christ, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom,' was graciously accepted, and answered by Christ, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise.' He did but *desire* Christ to remember him when he came into his kingdom, and Christ tells him, he *should forthwith* go with him into his kingdom, granting to him more than he did desire. Holy ejaculations are the spiritual breathings of a gracious heart, which, as they are very pleasing unto God, so exceedingly advantageous unto Christians: for, though they are very short, and sudden, yet seldom do they return empty.

2. 'These ejaculatory prayers are a special means for the improving of every opportunity and occurrence of providence to thy spiritual advantage.' When thou observest any providence of God

working to thy good (as a wise Christian cannot but observe many) if thou dost then lift up thine heart in some ejaculatory admiration and thanksgiving unto God for the same, thou wouldst much more improve them to a spiritual advantage, than now thou dost, through a careless neglect thereof.

Herein be careful to observe these two cautions.

1. Content not thyself with these ejaculatory prayers and praises, as if they were sufficient at thy lying down, and rising up; and that thou needest not to trouble thyself with any longer prayers. Oh! let not thy ejaculatory prayers justle out either thy closet, or family-prayers: but, as God, in his word, requireth the one, as well as the other, do thou make conscience of each, and every one of them, in their time and place.

2. Beware of formal and profane ejaculations, which come from the lip, but not from the heart, as *good Lord*, and, *good God*, or, *the Lord bless me;* and, *Lord, have mercy upon me*, with such like; which can be no better than a taking the name of God in vain, in that they are uttered customarily in a way of form, merely from the teeth outward; for which, without true and unfeigned repentance, God will not hold thee guiltless.

CHAP. IV.

Of reading the Scriptures in private.

ANOTHER duty to be performed alone, is, 'reading the scriptures.' And, indeed, the word and prayer should go hand in hand together, as the Christian's daily exercise; 'For, every thing is sanctified by the word of God, and prayer,' 1 Tim. iv. 5.

Appoint, therefore, some set time in every day for reading the word: the morning is the freest, when our spirits and wits are freshest. By reading three chapters a day, the whole Bible may be read over in a year. But I would not so strictly tie any to this, as still to go on in reading some part of the scriptures every day. And, if extraordinary occasion hinder thine ordinary task, double it another time; for, by the holy scriptures only, we may attain to the knowledge of the whole will of God.

This duty, therefore, Christ presseth upon all, and that with all care and diligence, John v. 39. where he commandeth us to 'search the scriptures.' The word in the original, *ereunate*, translated *search*, signifieth, 'with great diligence and industry to exercise ourselves in the scriptures, and to search after the true meaning thereof, even as worldly men do search in mines for gold and silver,' which we should the rather do, because every sentence, syllable, letter and title in the holy scriptures is of weight.

And, as this duty is commanded by our Saviour, so, we find it commended to us by the practice of the saints, and people of God: How did David exercise himself in the word? as appeareth by his own expression: 'Thy testimonies,' saith he, 'are my delight, and my counsellors,' Psalm cxix. 24. and the Bereans, we read, are commended 'for searching the scriptures daily,' Acts xvii. 11. and the apostle St. Paul sets it down by way of commendation of Timothy, 'That from a child he had known the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. and the Psalmist makes it the note of a blessed man, 'To delight in the law of the Lord, and therein to meditate every day.'

For the more profitable pressing this duty, I shall

I. Give you some Rules and Directions to be observed.

1. Before the reading of the scriptures.

2. In reading of them.

3. After the reading of them.

II. Give you some Motives to quicken you to a frequent reading of them.

The Rules and Directions to be observed before reading are these,

1. 'Handling it with all holy reverence, as in the sight and presence of God, *believing it to be* the word of God, written by holy men, as they were moved and inspired by the Holy Ghost,' 1 Pet. i. 21. When, therefore, thou settest thyself to read the word, say to thyself, 'I will hearken what the Lord will speak unto me therein.'

2. 'Quicken and rouse up thyself to all possible attention in reading of the word.' As children will rouse up themselves at the reading of their father's will, out of an expectation of some portion or legacy bequeathed them therein by their father; so, oughtest thou to rouse up thyself upon the reading of the word; in regard of the many rich and precious legacies, which our Saviour hath bequeathed to thee in that last will and testament of his, sealed with his blood.

3. 'Lift up thine heart in prayer unto God, as for the spirit of illumination, to open the eyes of thine understanding, that thou mayest rightly conceive his word, so, for wisdom to apply, memory to retain, faith to believe, and grace to practise, what thou shalt read.'

II. The rules and directions to be observed in reading of the word, are these:

1. 'Read the holy lives and actions of God's children, not only as matters of history, but as patterns of imitation;' for this end are they recorded unto us, as St. Paul testifieth, Rom. xv. 4. 'Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning.' But that you err not in this particular, know, that in

matters extraordinary, temporary, and sinful, the practice of God's saints is not to be a pattern for us; but in all general holy duties, and in such particular duties as belong to thy place and calling, thou art to set them before thine eyes, and to tread in their steps. Therefore, when thou readest of Noah's uprightness, of Abraham's faith, of Moses's meekness, of David's devotions, of Job's patience, of Josiah's zeal, of Peter's and John's boldness in Christ's cause, of Paul's labours, of other virtues of the ancient saints, labour to adorn thy profession with those graces, and ornaments, and to be inwardly and outwardly endued with like virtues.

2. 'In reading the promises and threatenings, the exhortations and admonitions, and other parts of the scripture, so apply them to thyself, as if God by name had delivered the same unto thee;' whereby the word will become very profitable unto thee: for, thus will promises to others encourage thee, threatenings against others restrain thee from sin; exhortations to others, stir thee up to thy duty, and admonitions to others, make thee wary. Yea, thus, whatsoever things were written aforetime, will prove good instructions to thee.

III. Rules to be observed after the reading of the word.

1. 'Seriously meditate of what thou hast read, that so thou mayest better remember, and understand the same;' for meditation is a special means to help as our memory, so our understanding, 'I have more understanding than my teachers,' saith David. Mark his reason, 'because thy testimonies are my meditation,' Ps. cxix. 99. And indeed, how is it possible that the word thou readest should do thee good, when thou never thinkest of it after thou hast read it?

2. 'Labour to work something of that thou hast read upon thine heart,' and give not over till thou hast found the affections of thy soul warmed thereby.

To quicken you up to a frequent reading of the scriptures, consider these motives.

1. The first may be taken from those treasures that are contained therein; such treasures as men never heard of. The subject matter of the word, are such mysteries as were hidden in God, and by his Spirit revealed unto men. All the abstruse learning, and mysteries of other books and writings, are but straw and stubble, yea, dross and dung, in comparison of the precious pearls in this.

Such things are revealed in the scriptures, as the very angels were desirous to know, and learn out of them; as the Apostle St. Peter expresses it, 1 Pet. i. 12. *Which things the angels desire to look into.* If we respect the *truth of matters we search into*, the scripture is a word of truth. If antiquity; none comparable thereunto; for, it beginneth with the beginning of the world. If history, all the books in the world besides, cannot afford such store

of strange and admirable histories: as of the deluge, of the destruction of Sodom, of God's bringing his people out of Egypt, and settling them in Canaan. If profitable matter; no writings can afford more than the scriptures, which alone declare what is truly profitable and most advantageous to our best good, our spiritual welfare. They shew us, as what is the true riches, and true honour; so likewise the means how to attain thereunto. Yea, as there is a more excellent appearance of the Spirit of God in the holy scriptures, than in any other book; so it hath more power and fitness to convey the Spirit, and make us spiritual, by imprinting itself upon our hearts. As there is more of God in it, so it will acquaint us more with God, and bring us nearer unto him, and make the reader more divine.

2. 'Another motive may be taken from the many secret and precious promises which are scattered up and down in the word.' For, as there is not a condition into which a child of God can fall, but there is a direction and rule in the word, in some measure suitable thereunto; so there is not an affliction into which a child of God can fall, but there is a promise in the word, in some measure suitable thereunto. God hath opened his heart unto us in the word, and reached out many sweet and gracious promises for us to lay hold on, and whereon to stay ourselves in our several straits and exigencies. To the burdened we find God hath promised ease and rest, Mat. xi. 28. Comfort to those who mourn, Mat. v. 4. Assistance and deliverance to them who are tempted, 1 Cor. x. 13. Yea, many promises hath God made of preservation and protection from evil; of a comfortable supply of all blessings, both temporal and spiritual, which by faith we may and ought to apply unto ourselves.

CHAP. V.

Of Christian Watchfulness.

DO not think, that having saluted God by prayer, and reading his word in the morning, thou mayest take thy leave of him all the day after: but second thy prayers, and reading, with Christian watchfulness; which is a duty incumbent upon all, being much pressed upon us in scripture.

For the profitable handling whereof, I shall shew you.

1. The nature of Christian watchfulness.

2. The necessity.

3. The extent thereof, or the particulars wherein we are to manifest the same.

I. 'For the nature of Christian watchfulness;' it is an heedful

observation of ourselves in all things, and a diligent circumspection over all our ways, courses, and actions, that we may not displease God in any thing, but rather please him in all things.

II. The necessity of which duty appeareth,

1. From the watchfulness of our common adversary the devil: for, as the Apostle Peter speaketh, 1 Pet. v. 8. 'Your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour; therefore be watchful.' Every word, as it is of special weight, so it contains a special argument unto Christian watchfulness.

1. He is your adversary, who will do you all the mischief that he can; therefore, *be watchful.*

2. He is set forth by his name, *devil;* which declares him to be an accuser, and one that seeketh all the advantages that he can against you; therefore, *be watchful.*

3. He is set forth by his *cruelty*, being termed a *lion*, yea, and a *roaring lion*, which addeth terror to his cruelty; therefore, you have reason to be watchful against him.

4. He is here set forth by his *sedulity* and *pains-taking; he walketh about*, he sits not still, but is restless to do mischief; therefore, *be watchful.*

5. He is here set forth by his *craftiness; seeking*, that is, every where prying for his own advantage; therefore, *be the more watchful.*

6. *By his malicious end and intent*, which is the destruction of men's souls; for, he *walketh about, seeking whom he may devour.* Having therefore such an adversary as the *devil*, who is both *cruel*, *crafty*, and *malicious*, it concerneth us to be watchful over ourselves.

II. Besides this foreign adversary, there is *hostis domisticus, an inward enemy.* Every man carries an enemy in his bosom, which is his corrupt heart, that is no less diligent, and more dangerous than the devil, and that appeareth in two respects especially.

1. Though there be a continual enmity between the devil and us, yet we are not in continual fight; whereas there is a continual combat and fight between the flesh and us: 'For, the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, Gal. v. 17. so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.'

2. The devil himself could not much hurt us, without the assistance and concurrence of our corrupt hearts. *Suadere & solicitare potest, cogere omnino non potest*, Aug. *Hom.* 12. 'He may persuade and solicit us, but he cannot compel us thereunto.' Did not our own corrupt hearts consent unto sin, the devil could little prevail with us: whereas our corrupt hearts are able to hurt us, without any assistance or concurrence of the devil. There is devil enough in the heart of every one of us, to delude and destroy us, without the help of any other devil. Having, therefore, such a dangerous adversary as the *devil* without us, and a more dan-

gerous enemy within us, viz. *our corrupt heart*, good cause have we to put in practice this duty of spiritual watchfulness.

III. For the extent of this duty, the Apostle sets it down in general terms, *Watch thou in all things*, 2 Tim. iv. 5. Which I shall branch into several particulars.

1. Over thy thoughts, words, and actions.
2. Against sin in general, and the several kinds thereof.

CHAP. VI.

Of Watchfulness over our Thoughts.

THOU must be watchful over thy *thoughts*, that *vain thoughts may not lodge in thine heart*, Jer. iv. 14. They arise from within us as naturally as sparks from the fire; and they follow us continually in every place, and in every service. If the thoughts of many were exposed to the view of beholders, what worldliness and covetousness, what pride, what wantonness and uncleanness would appear in many adorned sepulchres! for the more profitable pressing this duty, I shall,

1. Give you some motives to quicken you up thereunto.
2. Some directions and helps thereunto.

For motives. First, Consider, that wanton, proud and wicked thoughts, though they break not forth into acts, yet are they actual sins. Thoughts, though they are inward, yet are they the acts of the soul; and in that they are evil, they are sinful. Observable is that of Peter to Simon Magus, Acts viii. 22. 'Repent, if peradventure the thoughts of thine heart may be forgiven thee;' as if his evil thoughts had been a greater sin, than all his other wickedness.

2. Evil thoughts are not only sinful in themselves, but they are likewise the cause of all sins, the pander of all other lusts; *for when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin*, James i. 15. Lustful thoughts being conceived in the heart, they soon bring forth sin, breaking forth into all acts of filthiness and uncleanness.

3. 'Consider, that the Lord doth as strictly observe all inward sinful thoughts, as he doth the outward acts of sin.' He is omniscient and knoweth all things; yea, he is the tryer and searcher of our hearts, and so is privy to every vain and wicked, to every vain and ambitious thought in our hearts, howsoever men discern them not; yet the Lord doth, Psal. cxxxix. 2. saith David, 'Thou knowest my thoughts afar off;' that is, God, though far off in the heavens, yet so far understandeth all things, that our very thoughts are known to him; or else our thoughts while they are afar off, before they come to be expressly conceived, are known to him.

4. 'Consider that by our thoughts especially will the Lord judge us at the last day,' Rom. ii. 16 'God hath appointed a day wherein he will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ;' where by secrets of men may be meant, as their outward sins secretly committed, so also the inward secret thoughts of their hearts; then must we be accountable to God for our evil thoughts, as well as for our evil works; yea, for our vain and idle thoughts, as well as for our vain and idle words. Then the swarms of our vain, proud, wanton, worldly thoughts shall be discovered, and laid open to our eternal shame before God, angels, and men, without true and unfeigned repentance.

5. 'Evil thoughts without sincere repentance will sink our souls to hell.' Such of you therefore as make no conscience of your thoughts, but delight yourselves in vain, wicked thoughts, and that impenitently, how can you escape the vengeance of hell?

I deny not but the best men, through the remainder of corruption in them, are subject to vain, worldly, wanton, and ambitious thoughts: yea, sometimes to blasphemous and atheistical thoughts; but these are their grief and their burden against which they strive, and for which they earnestly beg pardon, and therefore shall not be laid to their condemnation.

Thus you see the scripture makes it a necessary part of godliness to be watchful over our thoughts: and questionless he that is not godly in his thoughts, is not truly godly in his actions. Thoughts shew what a man is, as much as his words and actions; 'For as he thinketh in his heart, so is he,' Prov. xxiii. 7. If therefore thou art truly watchful over thy thoughts, not allowing thyself in any proud, wanton, wicked thought, it is a comfortable evidence of the truth of grace in thee, and of the uprightness and sincerity of thine heart to God.

The helps and directions are these.

1. 'Be sure thou do not make too much of these vain worldly, wanton thoughts, which do either arise from thine own corrupt heart, or are cast in by Satan.' I mean, do not revolve them in thy mind, by musing and meditating on them with delight; for if so, thou art in danger to be ensnared by them.

2. 'With detestation speedily reject them, and cast them out of thine heart.' As in thy judgment thou canst not but condemn them as base and wicked, so in thy affections abhor and detest them, yea, reject and cast them away as abominable. They are easily and most safely resisted in their entrance; and their continuance will tend to thy ruin.

3. 'So soon as any vain and wicked thoughts begin to arise in thine heart, fix thy meditation upon good thoughts, especially such as are contrary thereunto.' Thus, when vain thoughts begin to arise in thine heart, strive to put them out, by fixing thy meditation upon some serious matter. When earthly worldly

thoughts begin to stir, fix thy meditation upon some spiritual and heavenly thoughts. When lustful and unclean thoughts begin to arise, fix thy meditation upon some holy and heavenly subject, think of the excellency and necessity of holiness, *Without which no man shall see the Lord*, Heb. xii. 14.

4. 'Humble thyself for all thy vain and wicked thoughts of what sort or kind soever.' If thou hast done foolishly in lifting up thyself, or if thou hast thought evil, lay thine hand upon thy mouth.' Prov. xxx. 32. that is, whether thou hast done foolishly or thought evil, humble thyself before God for the same; which is there meant, by laying thy hand upon thy mouth. And, know assuredly, that unless thou here humble thyself unfeignedly for thy vain and sinful thoughts, thou shalt full dearly answer for them hereafter at that dreadful day of judgment, when all the thoughts of thine heart shall be brought to light.

5. 'Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would be pleased, as to suppress and keep down all vain, worldly, wanton thoughts from rising in thine heart; so, that he would rebuke Satan, and restrain his malice, that he may not cast his hellish thoughts into thine heart; or at least that he would enable thee to quench them at their first entrance. This course did the apostle St. Paul take in the like case; 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8.

CHAP. VII.

Of Watchfulness over our Words.

AS thou must watch over thy thoughts, so likewise over thy words, Psal. xxxiv. 13. 'Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking guile.' What the Psalmist commended to others, we find he practised himself, Psal. xxxix. 1. 'I said, I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue.' If David, whose tongue and heart were continually prepared to praise the Lord, resolved with himself to keep a strict watch over his tongue: how much more ought we, who are apt to utter so many vain and idle, yea, wicked and profane speeches? For your help therein, take these few directions.

1. 'Avoid all unchaste speeches, and unsavoury discourses, which argue a corrupt heart:' For, as a 'good man out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good: so an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart bringeth forth that which is evil; for of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaketh,' Luke vi. 4, 5. Hereupon saith the apostle James, chap. i. 26. 'If any man seem religious and refraineth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain:' implying that all the devotion and religion

that such an one pretends, is mere vanity, it will do him no good, nor stand him in any stead; it will not save his soul, but he may go to hell for all his religion and profession: Therefore saith the apostle, Eph iv. 22. 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths.'

The corrupt speeches we ought carefully to avoid, are of several sorts, which may be reduced to these heads.

1. *Unlawful Swearing*, which is in three respects especially.

1. When men swear falsely, or, as we speak, forswear themselves. 2. *Impiously.* 3. *Rashly.*

First, they who swear falsely, whom we call perjured persons, are such as confirm any thing by oath against their knowledge, or swear to any thing which they intend not; or intending at first to do it, yet afterwards are careless and negligent in the performance of it.

These false swearers do not only sin themselves, but as much as in them is, bring God in compass of their sin, and make him partaker thereof. He is made a witness and an approver of a lie, and therein made like unto the devil, who is the father of lies, which is a most abominable dishonour done to the Holy Name of God.

2. *To swear impiously*, is an unlawful oath, either in regard of the *matter*, or of the *form.*

An impious oath; *in respect of the matter*, is by oath to bind a man's self to do some wicked thing; as those Jews who bound themselves with an oath to kill Paul, Acts xxiii. 14. And Jezebel who took an oath to slay Elijah, 1 Kings xix. 2. This kind of oath maketh God a patron and approver of wickedness.

An impious oath; *in respect of the form of it*, is, when we swear by other things besides God's holy name, as by any creature, as *Joseph by the life of Pharaoh.*

3. *To swear rashly*, is to swear lightly and frequently in our familiar talk and discourse. This, though it be a common and ordinary sin, indeed too, too common and ordinary, yet it is a most grievous sin, and a sin that crieth loud in the ears of God for vengeance. The heinousness of this sin appeareth,

1. 'In that God's name is thereby taken in vain,' which is a direct breach of the third commandment, for that forbiddeth us *to take the name of God in vain*, Exod. xx. 7. Now then is God's name taken in vain, when needlessly, without any just cause, it is used by any, against which there is a judgment threatened in the next words, *The Lord will not hold him guiltless;* that is, he shall not go unpunished.

2. 'Swearing in our ordinary discourse is the very livery of the devil, and the badge of profaneness,' Eccl. ix. 2. Solomon maketh it a sure sign of a godly man, to fear an oath; and of a wicked and profane person, not to fear an oath, to make no conscience

of it. And truly, ordinary swearing may well be a badge and note of a profane person; for such an one will make little or no conscience of any sin, who maketh no conscience of this sin of swearing, which is so vain and unprofitable a sin; for the excuse whereof, the swearer cannot plead any outward good; neither profit, as the covetous worldling; nor honour and preferment, as the ambitious person; nor pleasure, as the *voluptuous;* and therefore we may well conclude, that he who makes no conscience of swearing, will make little conscience of any other sin; for, he that will sin for nothing, as the swearer doth, certainly will sin for something; nay, what sin will not he commit for profit, pleasure or preferment, who, sticks not to profane the holy name of God for nothing?

II. 'Another kind of corrupt speech, is, when God's holy titles are upon every light occasion used, and so, plainly abused:' As when any thing suddenly happens out, then we presently say, O Lord, O God, O Jesus. Again when we would have any thing, then we are apt to say, for God's sake do this, for Christ's sake do that: and yet with no reverence do we think of God, or of Jesus, if we think of them at all, for commonly it is but a phrase of course. To say the least of this, it is a direct taking of God's name in vain, and so maketh us liable to that curse, 'God will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain,' Exod. xx. 7.

III. 'Imprecations both against others and ourselves, is another kind of corrupt speech.' It is too usual with many to make fearful imprecations both against others, which are ill-beseeming Christians, and likewise against themselves, wishing some great mischief against themselves, to confirm their speeches: Methinks such should be afraid lest God in judgment should hear them, and justly cause the vengeance they call for, to fall upon themselves. Let such remember the Jews, who cried out, *His blood be upon us and our children;* and from that day to this, hath it lain heavily upon them.

IV. 'Unclean and unchaste speeches.' Some men's mouths are always full of them, which plainly sheweth the pollution of their hearts, and how their minds, are wholly set on lust.

V. 'Idle and vain discourses which tend to no good.' Mat. i. 2, 36. saith our Saviour, 'Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment;' not only for filthy, unclean and unchaste speeches, but likewise for idle words, yea, for every idle word. And therefore how doth it concern us to be watchful over ourselves, as against all filthy and unclean speeches, so likewise against all idle words?

These are the kind of corrupt speeches, which we ought the more carefully to avoid, in regard of the heinousness of them.

II. 'Accustom yourselves to holy conferences and good communication.' It is not sufficient to abstain from corrupt communica-

tion, except you accustom yourselves to good communication. It is a good and gracious speech which commendeth a good and a sound heart: even as 'tis good fruit which commends a good tree. Christians ought to spend that time in serious and profitable discourses, which others spend in vain and frothy talk.

III. In all thy conferences forbear to speak evil of others, or whatsoever may tend to their disgrace or disparagement.' For thou shalt be sure to find others that will be as ready to judge and speak evil of thee, as thou hast of thy brother; who will have as little care of thy credit, as thou hast had of thy brother's; which argument our Saviour useth, Matth. vii. 1. 'Judge not, that ye be not judged, for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again.

IV. 'Be not lavish in your words, but sparing in your speech.' James i. 19. 'Let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak,' we oftener repent of our speaking, than of being silent. Trust no man with that, which, if ever it be discovered, may greatly prejudice thee; for he who is now a friend, may hereafter prove an enemy, and discover it; especially reveal no secret to him, whom thou knowest to affect others more than thyself, for he cannot conceal it from them. What thou wouldst not have told to others, tell no body; for if thou canst not, why shouldst thou think another will conceal what concerns thee?

V. 'Be well advised before thou speakest;' for sometimes many men's tongues do ever-run, and outstrip their wits. But do thou fore-think, whether that thou be about to speak be suitable and seasonable, and let not thy tongue run before thy mind.

VI. 'Let your ordinary speech be plain; without oaths, and imprecations; yea, without all vain asseverations, and protestations, Mat. v. 37. 'Let your communication, be, yea, yea, and nay, nay;' that is, let it be plain, and naked: for, 'whatsoever is more than these,' that is, whatsoever exceedeth a simple affirmation, or negation, 'cometh of evil:' in the Greek *ec tou pronerou*, that is, *of the evil one, the devil.*

VII. 'In all your conference speak nothing but the truth,' Eph. iv. 25. 'Wherefore putting away all lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.' Though lying be a sin common among all sorts of people, not only children, but also grown men and women, as in their ordinary discourse, so especially in their trading; wherein what more ordinary than lying and dissemblings? yet is it a most heinous sin, as will appear by a due consideration of these particulars.

1. 'It is a sin against knowledge and conscience, it cannot ignorantly be committed, for ignorance is against the nature of a lie; the word in Latin to lie, is as much as 'to speak against ones mind and knowledge,' *Mentiri est, contra mentem ire.*

2. 'It is most agreeable to the devil's nature;' so that a lying

spirit is a diabolical spirit, and a liar carrieth the very image and picture of the devil, who is the father of lies, John viii. 44.

3. 'It pulleth down God's fearful judgment and vengeance, and that both temporal in this world, and eternal in the world to come.' For proof whereof observe in general what David saith, Psalm v. 6. 'God will destroy all that speak lies.' More particularly, for temporal judgments in this world, the prophet Hosea, chap. iv. 2. reckons up lying amongst those gross sins, which caused God to send famine, plague, sword, captivity, and other like judgments on the Israelites. For eternal judgments, we find them likewise threatened against this sin: as in Rev. xxi. 27. Lying is there reckoned amongst those sins which bar us out of heaven, and Rev. xxi. 8. it is reckoned amongst those sins which thrust us into hell. 'But the fearful, and unbelieving, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and liars, shall have 'their portion in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' Here we may farther observe, amongst what heinous and capital sinners liars are reckoned, even among murderers, whoremongers, &c. which shews the heinousness of lying.

VIII. 'Pray unto God to sanctify your speech, and to direct it by his holy Spirit, that it may tend, as to the glory of his name; so, to the good both of the speaker and hearer. All our endeavours are nothing without God; and therefore we had need to go unto him by prayer, so to sanctify our words and speaches, that they may tend to the good of others, and minister grace to the hearers.

IX. 'Call yourselves to an account every evening, and ask yourselves what evil you have spoken that day;' your first care must be for preventing the sin; saying, as David, Psalm xxxix. 1. 'I said I will take heed to my ways, that I offend not with my tongue:' but your next care must be to repent of the faults which you commit, and to judge yourselves for them, and return.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Watchfulness over our Actions.

SEE that thou maintain a special watchfulness over all thy ways and actions: to this end,

I. 'Make God's word the rule of all thy actions. For as many as walk according to that rule, peace be on them, and mercy,' Gal. vi. 16.

II. 'Propound God's glory, as the chief end and aim of all thine actions. Whatsoever you do, do all to the glory of God, that God may thereby be glorified,' 1 Cor. x. 31. This is that

glorious end, for which you should spend your strength and time, and lay out yourselves to the utmost: for

1. 'Without this, your best actions, your most religious exercises find no acceptance with God.'

2. 'This puts a value and price upon all your actions; the more they aim at this end, the better they are, the more pleasing to God.' I grant it is impossible for a man in this life, actually to aim at, and intend the glory of God in every thing that he doth, yet ought he sincerely to endeavour after it.

I deny not, but other ends may creep into thine heart, and steal into the performance of thy best actions: as thine own profit, applause, and the like: but, know for thy comfort, that the Lord looketh more to the general bent of thine heart, and frame of thy spirit in what thou dost, than upon any particular base and by-end, which sometimes creepeth and stealeth into thine heart; and will reckon with thee according to the general purpose and aim of thine heart, and not according to some particular end and aim which hath crept in unawares, through the corruption of thine heart.

III. 'Be sure thou commend all thine actions and businesses unto God by prayer;' not enterprizing any thing without seeking direction, assistance, and a blessing from him. 'It is vain for you to rise up early, to sit up late, and eat the bread of sorrow,' unless the Lord put to his helping hand, and come in with a blessing, which is obtained chiefly by prayer. And, questionless, one special reason why many find not that success in their business which they desire, is, because they have not first commended them unto God by prayer.

IV. 'Having commended thy business unto God by prayer, be careful in the use of means for the furthering thereof.' For, where God hath appointed the ends, he hath appointed the means thereunto; and therefore, to think to obtain the one without the other, were presumption in an high degree. But therein take these two cautions.

1. 'Be sure the means thou usest be lawful:' never think to thrive by unlawful means; that will not in the end prove *gain*, which is got by the *loss* of thy soul. 'What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Mark viii. 36. *Cave itaque ne dum acquiras pecuniam, perdas animam.* Aug. de Temp.

2. 'Use the means as means, and set them not in the room of God,' by placing thy confidence in them, which is the way to blast all thy hopes.

V. 'Set God always before thee, and ever walk as in his sight and presence,' Gen. xvii. 1. which will be a special means to keep and restrain thee from many sins. This we read, kept Joseph from yielding to the wanton solicitations of his mistress,

though he had the opportunity of privacy: 'How can I,' saith he, 'do this great wickedness and sin against God?' It was the apprehension of God's all-seeing presence, that preserved him from closing with the inordinate affection of his mistress. Yea, nothing more keeps up the life of godliness, than a constant awe of God, and of his all-seeing presence about us, wheresoever we are, and whatsoever we are doing.

CHAP. IX.

Of Watchfulness against Sin, and the several kinds thereof.

'KEEP continual watch against sin in general, not bearing with thyself in the willing practice of any known evil.' In vain dost thou expect any true peace in thy soul, so long as thou retainest and favourest any one sin in thyself against thy conscience. For, as sin hinders communion with God, so communication from God.

For the better avoiding sin, observe these directions.

1. 'Carefully shun all the occasions and means, which may allure and draw thee unto sin.' It is impossible to eschew the one without the other. It is not possible that he who is inclined to drunkenness, should abstain from it, if he avoid not the places and company of drunkards: Neither is it possible for him that is wanton and lascivious, to abstain from filthiness and uncleanness, if he frequent unchaste company, and pamper himself in gluttony and drunkenness.

2. 'If thou art assaulted, resist sin in the beginning.' Do not dally with temptations, as the fly with the flame of a candle, lest thou be burnt before thou be aware: but withstand the first beginnings of sin.

3. 'If thou beest overtaken with any sin, labour to recover thyself with all possible speed, by true and unfeigned repentance, and a fresh recourse to the blood of Christ; and a sincere engaging to a greater watchfulness over thyself for the time to come.' Be sure thou do not live, nor lie impenitently in the practice of any sin against thy conscience, for so long thou wearest the devil's livery, and art a stranger to true peace.

4. 'Being recovered, take heed of relapsing.' A relapse is dangerous in bodily diseases, much more in spiritual: Christ therefore gave this advice to the poor cripple, whom he healed at the pool of Bethesda, 'Sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee,' John v. 14.

5. 'Carefully avoid the society and company of wicked men:' I mean all intimate society, and needless familiarity with them,

they being the devil's instruments, to solicit unto all manner of sin and wickedness. So that though they do not find the like unto themselves, yet, if thou frequently consort with them, they will soon make thee such, Prov. xiii. 20.

6. 'Consideration of the fearful issue and sad consequences of sin, would be a special means to keep thee from sin.' Questionless, one chief reason why so many men and women live in the wilful practice of known sin, is, want of consideration. Did they sometimes seriously weigh and consider with themselves, what is like to be the issue of their sins, what will become of their precious and immortal souls to all eternity, should they go on in their ungodly courses: did they lay it seriously to heart what a folly and madness it is in them to venture the loss of God, of Christ, and of heaven, and run the hazard of suffering everlasting burning with the devils and damned in hell, and for a little profit, or the satisfying a fleshly lust, the pleasure whereof is but for a moment: Certainly they would hate and abhor their sins, yea, and cast them away with indignation.

II. As thou must watch against sin in general, so likewise against the several kinds and sorts of sin. As,

1. Against thy beloved sin. There is none of us all but we have in us our darling and beloved sin, *peccatum in deliciis*, as St. *Austin* calls it, our own idol, (as I may say) whereunto we many times do service, to the great offence of Almighty God.

For the better discovery whereof, take these few *Directions*.

1. Observe which way the stream of thy thoughts run, especially thy morning thoughts. For whatsoever thy beloved sin is, upon that will thy morning thoughts most hover. This is a sure rule, every man is, what he is most in the morning. As he that is spiritual hath his morning thoughts upon God, or upon some spiritual and heavenly subject: so he that is worldly hath his morning thoughts upon the world; and he that is unclean, hath his morning thoughts about the satisfying of his carnal lusts.

2. Observe seriously, what sin it is thy conscience doth most and chiefly check thee for, especially in time of affliction: For conscience being then awakened, will most of all check thee for thy beloved sin.

3 'Observe what sin it is that thou hast least power to resist, and with which thou art oftenest and easiest overcome, notwithstanding thy conscience checks thee for the same.' Thou hast hereupon good ground to conclude that to be thy beloved sin.

4. 'Observe what it is thou thinkest upon with greatest delight:' if the thoughts of thine estate, and of encreasing the same, be pleasing and delightful unto thee, then thou hast cause to suspect covetousness to be thy beloved sin. If thoughts of fleshly pleasure tickle thee with delight, then thou hast cause to suspect uncleanness

to be thy Delilah, and beloved sin; or whatsoever sin it is thou thinkest on with greatest delight.

Having found out thy beloved sin thou must especially watch against that, lest thou be surprised by it.

1. 'Because this sin is so sweet and delightful to a sinner, that he doth very hardly part with it:' therefore it may fitly be called the sin that hangeth so fast on us, being not easily cast off, Heb. xii. 1. and, Mat. v. 29, 30. our Saviour calls our parting with our beloved sin, a-plucking out of our right eye, and a cutting off of our right hand: 'For, saith he, If thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee; and if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee, &c.' Which words are not literally to be taken, for then they are against the sixth commandment, but metaphorically; the eye, and the hand, being there put for our bosom and beloved sin. So that, the meaning of the words seemeth to be this, If thy lust or sin be as dear to thee as thy right eye, yet pluck it out by mortification, and cast it from thee. Or, if thy sin be as profitable to thee as thy right hand, whereby thou gettest thy living, yet, cut it off by mortification, and cast it from thee; for, it is better to mortify thy dearest sin, thy darling lust, than that thy whole man should perish.

2. 'One beloved lust in thy bosom, so alienates the heart, that it cannot love Christ as it should.' As, one stranger in the bosom of the wife so takes up our affection, that she cannot love her husband as she ought. We read in the evangelists, that one *covetous* lust in Judas, one *incestuous* lust in Herod, one *worldly* lust in the *rich man*, was of strength enough to hold each of them from Christ. As, therefore, thou desirest an interest in Christ, maintain an especial watch against thy beloved sin, that, that may not draw thine heart off from him.

For remedies against a beloved sin, take these,

1. 'Steep thy thoughts in a serious meditation of the bitter fruits, and dreadful effects thereof:' though thy sins may be sweet in the acting and committing thereof, yet, it will be bitterness in the end. For, one of these two things must needs follow thereupon, either the bitterness of repentance, or the bitterness of punishment. So that, let the best come of sin that can come, that thou savingly repent thereof, yet, bitter sorrows, bitter tears, and bitter mournings, are the issues of it: but if thy sin be not repented of, then comes the bitterness of death, and condemnation with the devils and damned in hell-fire to all eternity. We have a common saying amongst us; 'Sweet meat must *have* sour *sauce*;' thus, strong drink which goeth down merrily, will be bitterness in the end, according to that of the prophet Isaiah, chap. xxiv. 9. *Strong drink shall be bitter to them that drink it*, that is, it shall be turned into bitterness. And Solomon describing the harlot; (Prov. v. 4. with the contentments which she offers) concludes, *Her end is bit-*

ter as wormwood, not only her own end, but likewise the end whereunto she bringeth others: and, as it follows, *Her feet go down to death;* that is, she carries herself, and others that follow her, headlong, into that burning lake, where the fire of lust will be turned into the fire of hell, without true and unfeigned repentance. When, therefore, thou art tempted to any sin, reason thus with thyself, If I yield to this temptation, and thereby gratify my lust, either I shall repent, or not; if I do not repent, I shall be damned: if I do repent, it will cost me much more bitter sorrows and mournings, than I shall find pleasure and delight in the acting of it. O then, what egregious folly and madness must it needs be in any, for the enjoyment of a short transient pleasure here, to implunge themselves body and soul into everlasting burnings!

2. *Have frequent recourse unto God by prayer.* It is God's power that must support thee against the power of thy beloved lust; and it is prayer that must procure his power. But, let thy prayer be, as sincere, so fervent, for it is the fervent prayer only that is effectual. This was the course which St. Paul took, when he was troubled with that thorn in the flesh, whereof he complains, 2 Cor. xii. 7, 8. which many judicious expositors understand to be some lustful motion and inclination which he found in himself; 'For this he besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from him;' that is, he prayed oftentimes to be rid of it; and thereby he obtained, though not a full deliverance from it, yet, *strength* sufficient to master it, so as it had not dominion over him; for he received this comfortable answer, *My grace shall be sufficient for thee:* sufficient for thy deliverance, in due time; sufficient, in the mean time, for thy supportance. And, questionless, one special reason why so many complain of the strength and prevalency of their beloved lust, that it doth even rule and reign in them, is, because they do not pray unto God in the name of Christ, so heartily against it as they should; which, if they did, they would feel and find the grace of God sufficient for their supportance and deliverance.

II. 'Thou must with as great care and circumspection, watch against secret sins, as against open and public, making conscience of sinning in secret, even when thou hast opportunity of privacy for the acting and committing of them.'

1. 'Because we are more apt to fall into secret, than into open and public sins.' If we can hide our sins from the eyes and knowledge of men, we are apt to think all is well and safe; and thereupon encourage ourselves to sin in secret: therefore, the murderer and adulterer are brought in by Job, imboldening themselves, saying, *No eye seeth us*, Job xxiv. 12.

2. 'Howsoever we may hide our secret sins from the eyes of men, yet, it is impossible to hide them from the all-seeing eye of God,' who seeth all himself, unseen of any, 'being present in all

places, beholding both the evil and the good,' Prov. xv. 3. David's murder and adultery were carried on very secretly, yet were they visible to the eye of God: *Thou didst it secretly*, said God, *but I will punish thee openly.* If thou wilt sin secretly, saith Augustin, [*quære ubi te non videat, & fac quod vis*] *seek out a place where he seeth thee not, and there do what thou wilt.* But, seeing God is present in all places, it is impossible thou shouldst hide thy sins from his all-seeing eye.

3. 'As God here seeth and taketh notice of thy most secret sins, so, he will one day or other discover those deeds of darkness, to thy great confusion, without true repentance;' If not here in this life, yet, at the day of judgment, when our most secret sins shall be discovered to the view of all, Eccles. xii. 14. 'God will bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil.' Then all thy secret sins shall be discovered to angels, men, and devils; thy secret uncleanness, and close adultery; thy pilferings and stealings, thy false weights and measures, shall be brought to the view of all, to thine eternal shame and confusion. Were our hearts thoroughly possessed herewith, Oh how watchful would it make us over ourselves in secret! and fearful to adventure upon any sin, though we have the opportunity of privacy for the acting of it!

III. 'Thou must be watchful against the least sin,' not esteeming any sin so small and venial, as that thou mayest safely give it entertainment, and continue in it without true and unfeigned repentance; and that for these reasons.

1. 'By the least sin, the law of God is transgressed, his justice violated, and his wrath provoked:' And, therefore, far be it from us to account that sin little, which is committed against a God of infinite Majesty. Whereupon saith St. Augustin, *Ne consideres quod parva sint, peccata, sed quod magnus sit Deus cui displicent,* Aug. *de Pœnitent. vera & falsa*, cap. 8. 'Do not consider the smallness of thy sins, but the greatness of God, who is displeased and provoked by them.'

2. 'Little sins are apt to make way for greater:' who sees not by daily experience, that unclean thoughts and filthy words, draw many on to unclean actions? Yea, as Justin reports of Ninus his victories, how *every victory was a means of another conquest:* so, every small sin is a means and way to a greater. And this must needs be so, because, God in his judgment, doth usually punish sin with sin; I mean, God doth many times punish some mens' lesser sins, by leaving them so to themselves, and to the corruption of their own wicked hearts, that they break forth into the acting and committing of grosser sins. The best means, therefore, for a man to keep himself from great and heinous sins, is to be watchful against smaller sins, and to make conscience of them.

3. 'The least sin cannot be expiated nor pardoned, without

the precious blood of the Son of God:' that expression of the apostle is observable, *Christ was delivered to death for our offences*, Rom. iv. 25. The word in the Greek, *dia ta paraptomata*, translated *offences*, signifieth properly, our *slips:* implying, that our smallest sins could not be expiated, without the bloody death of Jesus Christ. O let not us over-lightly account of that for which Christ paid so dear a price, as his own most precious blood.

CHAP. X.

Of our Behaviour at Meals.

CONSIDERING our adversary the devil, layeth in every place, baits and snares to intrap us, and especially at our tables; therefore, it concerns, in a special manner, to be watchful over ourselves at meals; to that end,

I. 'Forget not to pray unto God for a blessing on the creatures, whereof thou art to partake;' for, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Tim. iv. 4. 5. 'Every creature of God is good, being sanctified by the word of God and prayer.' By the *word*, as it doth shew, and warrant our right thereunto; and, by *prayer*, as it is a means appointed by God, for obtaining his blessing upon his creatures, without which they will do us little good: 'For man liveth not by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God,' Mat. iv. 1. that is, 'Bread doth not nourish by its own power, but by the appointment and blessing of God.' And, therefore, it was the usual practice of our Saviour, to lift up his eyes, and crave a blessing upon the creatures, before he did partake of them; which hath been the usual practice of the saints and people of God, before and since Christ's time, 1 Sam. ix. 13. and Acts xxvii. 30. Having, therefore, such worthy patterns and precedents, follow them, not daring to partake of any of God's good creatures, till thou hast lifted up thine heart to God, and craved his blessing upon them; for, otherwise, how justly mightest thou expect from God a curse rather than a blessing? The creatures on thy table are God's creatures; and therefore, thou must needs be more bold than welcome, if thou make use of them without asking his leave.

II. 'Eat as in the presence of God,' who is ever present with us wheresoever we are; as in our beds, so, at our boards, eying and observing all our actions. It will be therefore, thy wisdom, wheresoever thou art, to carry thyself, as in his sight and presence, especially at thy meals, when thou art most apt to forget God, and to give out thyself to the creature, and to the satisfying of thy carnal lust and appetite.

III. 'In eating, and drinking, season thy heart with these, and the like meditations.'

1. 'Of the goodness and sweetness of God in his creatures;' else we shall make no better use of them than the brute beasts. Think, therefore, with thyself, Oh how sweet and good is God, who hath put such sweetness into his creature! If the streams be so refreshing and satisfying, Oh what refreshment and satisfaction is there in God, the fountain of all our mercies and enjoyments! If bread be so savoury to an hungry body, Oh how sweet and savoury is Jesus Christ, the bread of life, to an hungry soul.

2. 'Of the bounty of God, in providing so plentifully for thee, when many of thy betters (in some respects) are destitute of ordinary provision, and would be glad of the reversion of thy trencher.' Say with thyself, 'What, and who am I, that I should abound, when so many are in want? That I should be full, when so many good Christians have not wherewithal to satisfy their hunger? Oh what thanks do I owe unto God, for such singular mercies! And Oh that I could express my thankfulness, by living to his praise and glory!' Thus, whilst thou art feeding thy body, mayest thou delight thy soul in the goodness and bounty of God.'

3. 'Of thine own unworthiness of the least of God's mercies, even of a crumb of bread, or drop of drink, and that if God should deal with thee according to thy deservings, he might justly strip thee of all thy comforts.

4. 'Of thine own mortality.' As Joseph of Arimathea had his tomb in his garden, to season his delights with the meditation of his death; so shouldst thou, in thy greatest delights, let out thine heart in a serious meditation of thine own mortality. For this end, the Egyptians had a death's head brought into their presence, when they were feasting, even to mind them of their latter end.

IV. 'Season and sanctify your meals with spiritual communication, at least useful discourses, that thy soul, as well as thy body, may be fed and nourished.' To this end, take occasion to raise up both thine own heart, and the hearts of such as are with thee, to an affectionate remembrance of God, by whose goodness and bounty, thou enjoyest what is set before thee, that thereby thine heart may be inflamed with a greater love unto him. We read in the Evangelists, that it was Christ's usual practice at meals, to fall into such discourses, as tended to the spiritual good of those with whom he sat, ministering grace to the hearers; whose example herein is worthy our Christian imitation. And, in regard of your great backwardness unto, and barrenness in spiritual discourses, that you cannot suddenly find out any fit matter for them, it will be a point of spiritual wisdom in you, before-hand, to think of some seasonable, savoury heads, whereon to discourse at meals which may tend to the good and benefit of others; and resolve to embrace every opportunity, that is by any offered to you for good

discourse. I deny not, but you may lawfully at meals discourse, as of news, so of civil matters, and of your own affairs, and the like; yet, you shall do well to season your civil and moral discourses, with some spiritual and savoury expressions dropping something of the mercy, goodness, and bounty of God at every meal.

V. 'Use the good creature of God soberly and moderately, not to gluttony and excess.' Though no certain proportion of food can be prescribed to men, in regard, that all are not of a like age and constitution, neither have all like stomachs; yet, this is a certain truth, for a man to eat and drink so much as to oppress nature, and to indispose him either to the service of God, or to the duties of his calling; is a degree of intemperance, which, in time, will prove very prejudical to his health, breeding manifold diseases in the body (by filling it with crudities and dangerous obstructions) as the stone, stoppage of urine, the wind-cholic, gout, scurvy, surfeits, fevers, and the like. Yea, intemperance in diet doth likewise weaken the memory, dull the wit and understanding, stupify and decay the senses, and furiously provoke to lust.

Many, I know, do usually eat more than is sufficient from a desire of growth and nourishment, whereas, in truth, much feeding hinders them both; for they proceed not from the abundance we eat, but from a good digestion of what we eat, and perfect distribution thereof; both which are much obstructed by excessive feeding.

But, if thine health will not prevail with thee to be temperate in eating, consider, that thereby thou shalt find more pleasure in thy food: for, that pleasure must needs be greatest, which is most natural; and such, is the temperate man's; whose appetite to his meat, through his spare feeding, is kept fresh to the last, and consequently, his delight: whereas, the glutton, naturally finds no appetite, but is fain to force it by sauces. So that, the temperate man finds more sweetness in his ordinary fare, than the intemperate in his greatest dainties.

In thy eating, there are two rules worthy thy observation.

1. 'To leave off with an appetite,' whereby the stomach will the better digest what it receiveth.

2. 'To feed so moderately, that thou be neither unfit for the labour of thy body, nor for the employment of thy mind.' Such therefore, as after meals, do find an oppressive dulness, and indisposition to any business, may justly suspect, that they have exceeded the bounds of temperance, and perverted the end of feeding, which is, not to oppress, but refresh the spirits, and make the body more vigorous and active. And, questionless, to accustom thyself to a plain simple diet, as it is the most healthful, so, the best remedy against intemperance.

VI. 'Fail not to give thanks after meals, for that comfortable

refreshment you have found from the creatures.' This, the Lord gave in special command unto his people, Deut. viii. 10. *When thou hast eaten and art full, then thou shalt bless the Lord thy God:* Yea, we read that the heathenish idolaters at their feasts, were accustomed to praise their false gods; for it is said, Dan. v. 4. 'They drank wine, and praised the gods of gold, and of silver, and of brass, of iron, of wood, and of stone.' Is it not then a wonderful shame for Christians, after their meals, not to praise the true God, from whom we receive all the good things we do enjoy?

CHAP. XI.

Of Sports and Recreations.

AS you ought to be watchful over yourselves at meals, so likewise at your recreations. For, though some recreations are lawful, yet are we generally apt to abuse them into licentiousness, and to adventure upon all manner of sports and recreations, without any difference; therefore, I shall shew you,

I. What kind of sports which are used for recreations, are unlawful.

II. How those which are in their kind lawful, are abused, and so made unlawful.

Unlawful sports and recreations, may be brought to these heads.

1. 'All such, wherein neither wit of mind, nor exercise of body is used, as dice-play, and some games at cards;' for in them is nothing but an expectation of an uncertain event, wherein neither wit of mind, nor exercise of body is used; which are the main ends of sports and recreations, either for the refreshing of our minds, or bodies, that we may thereby be the better enabled for the honouring of God, in the discharge of the duties of our places and callings.

2. 'Such as bring danger to men;' as of old was fighting with beasts; and now matches at foot-ball, fighting at cudgels, especially fighting with sharp weapons and the like.

3. 'Such as declare God's punishment on the creatures for man's sin:' as bear-beating, cock-fighting, and the like; the enmity that is in one creature against another, is a punishment on the poor creatures for man's sin; and therefore, ought not to be a ground, or matter of sport and rejoicing unto us, but rather of sorrow and humiliation.

II. The next thing to be considered is, How those sports, which are in themselves lawful, are made unlawful, by mens' manner of using them.

1. 'When too much time is spent in them:' Recreations should be as sauces to your meat, to sharpen your appetite unto the duties of your calling; and not to glut yourselves with them, so as to make yourselves the more unfit, both for the duties of your callings, and of God's service. You must know, that the main and principal end of God's sending you into the world, was not to follow your pleasures, but that you should spend your time and strength in the duties of God's service, and in the means whereby you may be fitted thereunto. Will it not be more comfort to thee, when thou art dying, to think of the time thou hast spent in the service of God, and in preparing for eternity, than of that time which thou spendest in cards, and plays, and other vanities?

2. 'When mens' recreations are made a trade of merchandize:' as when men play merely to get money; that which a man gains by this traffic, he cannot with a good conscience possess and enjoy: It is not by God given him, because he cometh not to it by lawful means, but is rather as stolen goods, over which God's curse hangeth. And as for the party that loseth, he also is guilty of theft, for that which he loseth, he purloineth from his wife, children and family, if he have any, or if not, from church, commonwealth, and poor. We are not lords of our goods, but stewards, and must give an account of them. Oh that all our gamesters would consider, what a fearful reckoning they are to make at the day of judgment; not only of their precious time lavishly mispent, but also of their estates; for the most part, wickedly lost; when in their account there shall be found so much wasted in gaming, and so little given to the poor and charitable uses.

Q. Is it altogether unlawful to play for money?

A. I will not say it is altogether unlawful to play for money, provided that what you play for, be but a small matter of little value, which is to be measured according to the estate and quality of those who play. But how is the gaming of most men the very exercise of covetousness, merely to win other mens' money?

3. 'Lawful recreations are made unlawful, when they are used at unseasonable times;' as on days of humiliation, and on the sabbath-day, in which time the Lord forbiddeth all men to *seek their own pleasure*, Isa. lviii. 13.

4. 'When they are so used, as they raise a man's passion unto anger, fury, and the like;' or that they cause swearing, cursing, brawling, quarreling, with the like evil effects. He that cannot moderate his passion, or rule his tongue at play, is not fit for it.

CHAP. XII.

Of the Duties of our Callings.

HAVE especial regard to the duties of that particular calling wherein thou art placed by God's providence, in a conscionable discharge whereof consisteth the very life and power of religion. For thy help therein take these *Directions.*

1. 'Begin with God, by seeking unto him by prayer, as for the pardon of thy sins, and supply of all needful graces, so, for his blessing upon thy lawful pains and endeavours?' For indeed, it is his blessing alone that maketh rich, and that causeth any thing we take in hand to thrive and prosper; which Moses acknowledgeth, Deut. viii. 18. where speaking to the people of Israel, he saith, *It is the Lord that giveth thee power to get wealth.*

2. 'Be careful and diligent in the duties of thy calling,' according to that direction of the wise man, Eccl. ix. 10. *Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;* that is, whatsoever works or duties belong unto thee by virtue of thy calling, do them diligently and industriously; not so much to ingross wealth, as for necessaries, and competent provision for thyself, and wife, and children. This likewise our Saviour commendeth to us by his own practice; *For*, saith he, *I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day.* This phrase, *ergadses thai ta erga*, '*work the works*,' is an *Hebraism*, and implieth, 'a thorough acting or doing of any thing, and that with all diligence.'

For thy encouragement thereunto, know, that diligence in our callings is usually crowned with riches, and plenty, Prov. x. 4. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich*, and, Prov. xiii. 4. *The soul of the diligent shall be made fat;* that is, shall be enriched with outward blessings: And truly it is very rare, but that a blessing doth accompany a diligent hand.

Yet herein care is to be had, lest, while you are diligently following the works of your calling on the one hand, you be not overtaken with worldliness, and covetousness on the other. Therefore I shall give you two cautions.

1. 'Be not so diligent in thy particular calling, that thou neglect the duties of thy general calling, as a Christian;' I mean, be not so eager in following thy worldly businesses and employments, that thou neglect thy spiritual business; as, thy morning and evening devotions unto God, &c. though thou mayest spend the greatest part of every of the six days in thy worldly business and employments, yet thou oughtest to spend some part of every day in spiritual employments, whereby thy worldly business will be the better seasoned and sanctified. When thou comest to lie upon thy death-bed, and lookest back unto thy life, then that time which

hath been taken from thy worldly businesses and spent in praying, reading, hearing, meditating, and the like, will yield thee most comfort.

2. 'Labour to be heavenly-minded in earthly employments;' to follow worldly businesses with spiritual affections, often lifting up thine heart unto God in some heavenly ejaculations. Yea, labour to make some improvement of that time, wherein thou art following the work of thy calling, to some spiritual advantage, by useful meditations; especially if thy employments be such as exercise the hand, and not the head. As thou art eagerly following thy worldly businesses, often meditate on that excellent saying of our Saviour, Mark viii. 36. *What will it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?*

3. 'Resolve and strive to be faithful and sincere in all the works of thy calling;' and with a kind of disdain abhor to get any thing by wicked and deceitful courses; as knowing that a little ill-got may impoison a man's whole estate, and bring a curse upon all that he possesseth. It may prove like the *eagle's flesh from the altar, with a coal in it*, that devoured the whole nest.

Let there be, therefore, truth and equity, and plainness in all thy dealings with men, 1 Thess. iv. 9. 'Let no man go beyond, and defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such:' But in all our dealings, let us observe that royal law, and standard of all equity, namely, *To do as we would be done by:* for, as our Saviour speaketh, Mat. vii. 12. *This is the law and the prophets*, that is, the sum of that, which, in the law, and by the prophets, is delivered, concerning our carriage towards our neighbours, and dealings with them.

Having used thine utmost diligence in thy lawful calling, trouble not thyself with carking and distrustful thoughts about the issue and success of thine endeavours. *Take no thought*, saith our Saviour, Mat. vi. 31. *What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherwithal shall we be clothed.* The word in the Greek translated, *take no thought, merimnan meridsien ton noun*, implieth a 'carking distrustful thought,' whereby the mind is disquieted about the issue and success of our endeavours; which is very unbeseeming a Christian.

5. As oft as thou receivest any blessing from God, forget not to return him the praise, and the glory thereof; acknowledging, that whatsoever the means hath been, he is the chief cause, and principal Author of all those benefits and blessings which thou enjoyest.

CHAP. XIII.

Of our Behaviour in Secret.

IN regard of the manifold temptations whereunto we are subject, both when we are by ourselves alone; and also when we are in company with others: It is our duty, and will be our wisdom to keep a narrow watch over ourselves, both in our solitariness, and also in company.

First, When we are alone, our care must be, that we be neither ill-employed, nor idle and unfruitful; but that we be taken up with spiritual and heavenly meditations.

1. 'For solitariness is the devil's opportunity;' which he hath always been careful to embrace and to improve to the utmost advantage; as we see in David, who when he was walking alone upon the roof of his house, then the devil set upon him, tempted him unto lust, and prevailed with him. And therefore, how doth it concern us to be then especially watchful over ourselves?

2. 'Because we are then in most danger to be overtaken and foiled with our own sinful lusts;' then are we most apt to let out our hearts in speculative wantonness, and contemplative wickedness, by feeding our fancies, and pleasing ourselves in ambitious, revengeful, lascivious, and other wicked thoughts, In which respect, we ought in our solitariness carefully to watch over our hearts, being then in greatest danger of these spiritual rapes.

To this end I shall commend that excellent, but too much neglected duty of *Divine meditation*, which is two-fold.

1. *Sudden and occasional.*
2. *Set and deliberate.*

For the nature of occasional meditation; 'It is a sudden fixing the mind upon some profitable subject, occasioned by something that we see or hear.' The which may be done at all times, and in all places, when we are at home about the works of our calling, or walking abroad. Of this sudden and occasional meditation there may be much use, by reason of the variety of objects which present themselves to our view; for every creature that we behold doth afford unto us plentiful matter of spiritual and heavenly meditation: from each of them we may and ought to take occasion to meditate of God, and of his attributes shining in them; as his power, wisdom, goodness, and other attributes.

For *Motives* thereunto, take these three.

1. It will be a special means to keep worldly, wanton thoughts, and idle motions out of thine heart. For, if thou give up thyself to idleness; not laboring to possess thy mind with some good and profitable meditation; thou art sure to be pestered with vain and wicked cogitations.

2. A frequent use of occasional meditations, will fit thee for set and solemn meditation; in that it will both furnish thee with matter, and prepare thine heart to commune with God.

3. Hereby thou shalt make a right use of the creatures. The creatures are half lost unto thee, if thou only employ them, and not take out some spiritual lesson from them.

Thus much of sudden and occasional meditation.

A word or two of the *set, solemn, and deliberate meditation*, in regard there are many excellent treatises published on that subject. I shall therefore briefly shew you: first, the nature of the duty: secondly, give you some rules and directions to be observed therein.

I. For the nature of it, what it is; I answer, A set and deliberate meditation, is, 'a serious applying of the mind to some spiritual, or heavenly subject,' discoursing thereof with thyself to the end thine heart may be warmed, thine affections quickened, and thy resolutions heightened to a greater love of God, hatred of sin, &c.

II. The directions to be observed therein, are these,

1. Let the subject matter of thy meditation be wholly Spiritual and Divine. Thus any part of the scripture is a fit subject for thy meditation: as also God, or any of his attributes; as his omnipotency, eternity, immutability, omnipresence, omnisciency, holiness, wisdom, mercy, justice, love, faithfulness, and other excellencies of God: As also the blessed and happy estate wherein our first parents were created by God, and that miserable estate whereinto they implunged themselves, and all their posterity, by their disobedience against God in eating the forbidden fruit, and the state of redemption by Jesus Christ, and the transcendent love of God in giving his Son for us, and the unconceivable love of Christ in undergoing a bitter cursed death for our redemption.

2. 'Let the particular subject thou pitchest upon for thy meditation, be suitable to thy present state and condition:' To that end, it will be thy wisdom, in setting upon this duty, to observe the frame and temper of thy heart. If thou findest thine heart sad and heavy, then fix thy meditation upon thy sins, that so thou mayest turn thy sorrow and sadness for outward things, into a sorrow for thy sins. But, if thou findest thine heart lightsome and cheerful, then fix thy meditation on the incomprehensible love of God, or on the freeness of his grace, or on the bounty of God, especially towards thyself.

3. 'Having pitched thy thoughts upon some particular subject suitable to the present frame and temper of thine heart; continue thy thoughts upon it, till thou hast found thine heart warmed, and thine affections quickened therewith:' which, indeed, is the main and principal end of this exercise.

4. These things premised by way of preparation, *fall upon the work itself*, which consisteth of three particular heads.

'The first I may call *cogitation*, whereby I mean, a discoursing of the understanding about the subject-matter pitched upon,' a calling to mind of several truths that belong thereunto. As, if the subject of thy meditation be death, then call to mind, and seriously think as of the certainty of death, so also of the uncertainty thereof, both in regard of the place where, the manner how, and the time when; and then to argue the necessity of a continual expectation of, and preparation for death.

The second is *application*, to make some close application to thyself of those truths thou hast called to mind, for the warming of thine heart, and quickening of thine affections.

The third and last particular is *resolution*, as resolved purpose of heart to do this or that; as, if the subject matter of thy meditation hath been death, and finding thine heart thoroughly affected with the apprehension thereof, especially of the uncertainty of the time of thy death, resolve thereupon to be the more careful in embracing every opportunity of doing good, thinking it may be the last that will be afforded unto thee; as also to live in a continual expectation of, and preparation for death, by a daily renewing thy peace with God.

CHAP. XIV.

Of our Behaviour in Company.

AS thou must be watchful over thyself when thou art alone, so likewise when thou art in company, looking unto thy behaviour therein; and the rather, because we are generally more apt to transgress in company, than when we are alone: Therefore I shall set down some directions to guide thee, when thou art in company.

But, first, it will not be amiss to premise an argument or two, to persuade thee, to make choice of the good and godly, and by no means of wicked and ungodly persons for thine ordinary converse: As also a preparatory advice or two for the better fitting and preparing thee to improve thy converse with men to the best spiritual advantage.

1. Therefore *highly prize, and earnestly seek the company of such as are godly*, whereby thou wilt find a greater increase in thy piety, knowledge, faith, zeal, and all other graces. And, it may be observed, that where the people of God do not associate themselves in holy communion, there is little thriving in grace and godliness though they live under never so powerful a ministry.

2. 'Avoid, as much as may be, the society of wicked and

profane persons,' especially such as are scoffers at godliness and religion.

1. Because we are very apt to be corrupted with the contagion of their sins. 2. We are in danger to be involved in their temporal plagues. 3. We shall thereby encourage and embolden them in their wicked and profane courses; it being a great encouragement unto wicked men, to go on in their wicked and sinful courses when they are countenanced with the company of the godly.

Now, for the better fitting and preparing thyself for profitable converse, when thou art in company; I shall only give these two advices.

1. That thou mayest be the better furnished with matter for useful discourse, often and seriously meditate with thyself on some general head of divinity, as of our wretched and miserable condition by nature, of the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice, of the vanity and uncertainty of all earthly things, of the shortness of this life, of the day of judgment, or the like. By often contemplating of these, or such like things, with thyself in secret, thou wilt be better enabled to talk and discourse of them in the presence of others and that to their good and edification, as well as to thine own.

2. Before thou goest into company, be earnest with God in prayer for grace so to order thy conversation and discourses, that they may tend, as to the glory of his name, so to thine own and others good, and spiritual advantage.

These things thus premised, come we now to the directions for the good government of thyself, when thou art in company, which I shall lay down,

1. More generally.
2. More particularly.
1. In reference to thy behaviour in good company.
2. In reference to thy behaviour in bad.

The general directions for thy behaviour in company, are these.

I. Let thy carriage and conversations be humble, willing to communicate thy counsels, comforts and experiences to the poorest and meanest Christians, and to partake of their counsels, comforts, and experiences; not disdaining to learn any good thing of those, who in several respects, are much thine inferiors.

II. In all thy conversings with men, labour to be fruitful and profitable, both to thyself, and others, by receiving and doing all the good thou canst.

1. To thyself, by receiving all the good thou canst from others. To this end, when thou art in the company of others, diligently observe in what gifts and graces any doth excel, (for God hath dispensed various gifts unto his people, all are not alike

qualified;) and then labour to draw forth those gifts and graces to thine own spiritual good and advantage.

2. To others, by communicating unto them such good things as thou conceivest most suitable unto their present state and condition. The more good thou communicatest unto others, the more will God communicate unto thee.

'Often lift up thine heart unto God in some short ejaculatory prayer, that he would open thy lips that thy mouth may shew forth his praise;' that he would enable thee so to speak, that thy words and discourses may tend to the good and edification of others, ministering grace to the hearers.

Having thus given thee general directions for thy behaviour in company, come we now to the more particular directions, referring to thy behaviour in good company.

I. When thou art in good company, trifle not away thy time with worldly conferences, and discourses, as the common fault of too, too many is, whereof Saint Bernard complained in his time, *Nihil de Scripturis, nihil de salute agitur animorum, sed nugæ & riscus & verba proferuntur in ventum.* But let the subject of thy discourse rather be some spiritual matter.

II. 'Labour to turn the current of worldly discourses into spiritual:' To that end, watch every opportunity which may occasion any digression from worldly matters, into some spiritual and heavenly subject.

III. 'Be ready to communicate and impart such spiritual gifts and graces as thou hast received.' Hast thou any competent measure of saving knowledge? communicate thy knowledge unto others, by acquainting them with the mysteries of salvation. Hast thou found comfort after thy spiritual troubles and desertions? Hast thou found support under thy trials and temptations? Hast thou found gracious answers and returns to thy prayers? Hast thou got the victory over any lust or corruption? freely and willingly communicate and impart unto others, the experiences thou hast had of God's mercy, power, and goodness, in thy several straits and exigencies, directing them to such ways and courses, wherein thyself hast found much good and benefit. This we find expressly commanded, 1 Pet. iv. 10.

The particular directions, referring to our behaviour in bad company, are these:

I. 'When by reason of some common occasion, thou art in bad company,' (for otherwise, as we shewed before, thou art by all means to avoid it) 'see that thy conversation be with a dove-like innocency, blameless and harmless;' according to that exhortation of the Apostle, in Phil. ii. 15. The truth is, there is scarce a better means to propagate the gospel, and to fasten it on the affections of natural men, than the fair carriage and honest conver-

sation of the professors thereof: It is as the odour of Christ's ointment, the fragrancy whereof draws the affection of others.

II. 'Be careful that thou partake not of their sins:' which direction the Apostle giveth, Eph. iii. 11. 'Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.' He meaneth, that they should no way communicate, or be partakers with their sins, which he calleth the *works of darkness.*

Q. How may we be said to partake with others in their sins?

A. Men partake of others' sins, as by provoking them to sin, so by approving their sin. Men approve others' sins openly, or covertly; openly, by word, or deed.

By word, 1. 'When they commend others for their sins.'

2. 'When they patronize and defend them in their sins.'

3. 'When they sooth them up, and flatter them therein.' Men approve others' sins by deed, when they be companions and agents with them in the same sins. Covertly men approve others' sins, when they tacitly consent unto them. He may be said tacitly to consent, that either revealeth not the sin he knows, when he ought, or shews no dislike of it, when he beholds it. And this oftentimes is as hurtful, in respect of the offender, as ill counsel; for, as 'evil speech moveth men to sin, so evil silence leaveth men in sin.' *Ut malus sermo inducit in peccatum, sic malum silentium relinquit in peccato.* Aug.

III. 'Grieve and mourn for the sins thou discernest amongst them.' It is noted oft, and commended as a special grace, in sundry of God's saints, that they have been greatly troubled in themselves at the dishonour done to God, even by the sins of others; as Moses, Nehemiah, David, Jeremiah, and others, Deut. ix. 18, 19. Neh. i. 4. Psalm cxix. 158. Jer. xiii. 17.

IV. 'When thou observest any wickedness committed by thy neighbour, reprove him for the same:' which duty we find much pressed upon God's people in the scriptures; Lev. xix. 17. 'Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thine heart: thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy brother, and not suffer sin upon him.' Wherein are implied two things.

1. 'That he who doth not reprove his brother when he seeth him do amiss, doth indeed hate him, and not love him;' for, there is no love like the love of reproof.

2. 'That by not reproving thy brother, thou sufferest him to run on, and continue in his course of sin,' which will at last prove his destruction.

For the right manner of performing this duty, both certain general rules must be observed, and also particular, according to divers circumstances. General rules are these.

1. 'He that reproveth another, must lift up his heart in prayer unto God,' that he would so guide his tongue, and move the other's heart, that his reproof may be profitable unto him: for,

without God's blessing, all our admonitions and reproofs, will prove but words spoken in the air.

2. 'Our reproofs must be done in love,' aiming therein at our brother's good, and not at all at his disgrace. For, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xvi. 14. 'All things must be done in love:' And, as *all* things, so, especially, this of reproof. Concerning particular rules, both the state of the party reproving, and of the party reproved, and the quality of the sin, together with time and place, must be observed.

1. 'The state and condition of the party reproving must be observed.' As they who have authority over others have greater liberty to reprove, so if they have to deal with notorious, scandalous offenders, they then may and must do it.

1. 'With *authority*;' as the apostle exhorteth, 'Rebuke with authority.' Tit. ii. 15.

2. *Sharply*, so the apostle commandeth, 'Rebuke them *sharply*,' Tit. i. 13. The word in the Greek *atomoos* translated sharply, properly signifieth *cuttingly*, or to the quick. *Eli* failed herein; tho' he reproved his sons for their wickedness, yet it was not *sharply*, and *to the quick*, but with too much gentleness and mildness.

2. 'The mind and disposition of the party *reproved* must be observed.' For, if he be flexible and ingenuous, he must with mildness be reproved, even with the spirit of meekness; as the apostle Paul expresseth it, Gal. vi. 1. But yet severity must be used, when lenity prevails not.

3. 'The state and condition of the party reproved is to be observed.' For,

1. If it be our superior, it must be done with all reverence and humility, rather beseeching and exhorting, than plainly rebuking, as Naaman's servants did their master, 2 Kings v. 11, 13.

If the party to be reproved be our equal, then it must be done without all bitterness, even with all love. Reproof is a bitter pill; and therefore it must always be rolled with sugar, expressing much meekness of spirit, and compassion of heart; shewing in the hatred of our brother's sin, our love of his person.

4. The quality of the sin reproved must likewise be observed.

1. Private offences must be privately reproved: For, saith our Saviour, 'if thy brother trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone,' Mat. xviii. 15. But open and scandalous offences must be reproved openly. 1 Tim. v. 20. *Them that sin, viz.* openly and with scandal, *rebuke before all; i. e.* before the whole assembly of the church, *that others also may fear.*

2. Sins directly tending to God's dishonour, must be reproved with an holy zeal and indignation. Christ thus often reproved the scribes and pharisees. And thus Peter reproved Simon Magus, Acts viii. 22.

5. The seasonableness of the time must with great wisdom be ob-

served. To rebuke a drunkard in his drunkenness is folly; Abigail knew as much; and therefore said nothing to Nabal in his drunken fit, but in the morning when the wine was gone out of him. So neither is it seasonable to reprove a man for his passion in his passion; wait rather for a fit time, till a man's fit and passion be over.

6. The seasonableness of the place must likewise be observed. Unless it be for due and just censure, let it not be in public assemblies, open streets, with the like. But if by the way thou observest a man sin, whom thou knowest not whether ever thou shalt see him again, or no; then, as privily as thou canst, thou mayest meekly rebuke him. Thus shalt thou manifest thy zeal for God's glory, thine hatred of sin, and thy care for thy brother's salvation.

CHAP. XV.

Directions to the Rich.

AS the apostle Paul knew how to be abased, and how to abound; how to be full and how to be hungry, Phil. iv. 12. that is, he had learned, in the school of Christ how to carry himself Christian-like in a rich and in a poor estate; so it will be a point of special wisdom in us, to know how to carry ourselves Christian-like through variety of conditions, how to manage every estate. For your better help herein, I shall give you some directions.

1. How to carry yourselves Christian-like in a rich and full estate.

2. How to carry yourselves Christian-like in a poor and mean estate. For the former:

I. Look up unto God, and often think of him as the author and donor of all the good things thou dost enjoy. When thou hast gotten wealth, say not, This have I gotten by my own wisdom and policy: For, how many men of as great understanding and wisdom as thyself, have not the tithe of thy estate? Neither say, This have I gotten by mine own travel, pains, and endeavours. For how many men have been as industrious as thyself, and yet have not found that success which thou hast done? And therefore say with Job, chap. i. 21. *The Lord hath given.*

II. Bless God for what thou hast: 'In every thing give thanks (saith the apostle, 1. Thess. v. 18.) for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you:' As if he had said, This is what the Lord by his Son Jesus Christ, hath signified to be his will: and is, after a sort, the whole he requireth of us, for all the mercies we receive from him. And, therefore as thou receivest any mer-

cy and blessing from God fail not to give unto him the praise and the glory thereof.

III. Labour to see God's special love in common mercies. For, what good will the enjoyment of any thing do thee, unless thou canst see God's *love* to thee, as well as his *bounty* therein?

Q. How may I know that these outward mercies, which I do enjoy, are bestowed on me in love and favour?

A. 1. If they enflame thine heart with a love to God, causing thee to love him the more, because he hath been so bountiful unto thee. For, this is a sure rule, Whatsoever causeth love cometh from love. Examine therefore, whether those outward good things, which thou dost so plentifully enjoy, have wrought up thine heart to a true love of God: For if so, then mayest thou assure thyself, that they were bestowed upon thee in love; and thou mayest look upon them as tokens of God's especial love and favour.

If thou findest in thyself a willingness to honour God in the use of those good things thou hast received from him, by laying out a portion thereof towards the maintenance of God's worship, or the relief of God's poor, then thou hast a comfortable evidence that they are bestowed upon thee in love.

3. If it be the grief of thine heart that thou dost not answer the loving-kindness of the Lord towards thee; then thy conversation is so unsuitable to his gracious dispensations towards thee; that thou dost not, in any measure, live up to his bounty towards thee: This is an evident sign, that what thou hast received from God; was bestowed upon thee in love; and thou mayest look upon them, as tokens of his special love and favour.

IV. Beware of being puffed up with pride, and labour to be humble under thine abundance; to be low in thine own thoughts, when thou art high in the world; which indeed will prove thy glory. For, humility is an ornament, as the apostle Peter implieth under that word *engcombosasthe, be clothed or decked with humility*, as, with an ornament, 1 Pet. v. 5. Many men think humility a debasement, but the Spirit of God counteth it an ornament: Therefore saith the apostle James, chap. i. 10. *Let the rich man glory in that he is made low;* that is, let him glory in his humility, because God hath given him an humble and lowly heart, notwithstanding his riches and greatness in the world; because he hath a low mind in an high condition; for, it is the glory of rich men, that, when God hath made them *high* in the world, they are *low* and *humble* in their own thoughts.

V. Labour for the true spiritual riches; namely, saving, sanctifying graces, that thyself may be rich, and not thy chest only. And, truly, rich men, of all others, stand in most need of sanctifying graces; in regard their riches are great snares unto them, and occasions of sin, as a long coat is in greater danger to be dag-

led than a short one. Oh, therefore, beg of God, that he would not put thee off with the things of the world; but that, together with his outward blessings, he would give thee his inward blessings, true, saving, sanctifying graces, especially the grace of spiritual poverty, which is the foundation of blessedness; as Mat. v. 3. *Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.* It was an excellent speech of Luther, when the princes of Germany sent him in great presents, *Valde protestatus sum, me nolle sic ab eo satiari.* 'I profess,' saith he, 'the Lord shall not put me off so.' Do thou, in the like manner, take up the same resolution.

VI. 'Earnestly labour, and seriously desire, in the use of all means, an interest in Christ,' in whom are riches, and treasures above all the riches and treasures of the world. He is that pearl of great price, that treasure hid in the field, for which the wise merchant went and sold all that he had. Abraham, though he had abundance of all outward things, yet cries out, 'What is all this, seeing I go childless?' Do thou in like manner, in the enjoyment of thine outward abundance, cry out, 'Lord, what is all this; seeing I go Christless?'

VII. 'Communicate out of thy store towards the relief of others:' Giving to the poor, as it is a duty incumbent upon all that are able, so, especially upon the *rich.* The apostle Paul, therefore, willeth Timothy, to charge such as *are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works,* 1 Tim. vi. 17.

The better to quicken you up to this duty, consider these few things.

1. This is an especial end of God's giving more to some than to others, that they who have more abundance, should thereof give to them that need. This inference doth St. Paul make (2 Cor. viii. 14, 15.) from the distribution of *manna,* Exod. xvi. 18. for they that gathered more than was needful for themselves and their households, gave of their abundance to such as had not enough.

2. Rich men are not lords of the abundance which they have, but stewards, and must dispose thereof according to the mind of the Lord; that is, some part thereof to the poor: and, therefore, of all unmerciful men, such as are rich, and have enough for themselves and others too, are worthy of most blame. Such an one was that rich man in the parable, of whom it is said, Luke xvi. 10, *&c.* that he was *cloathed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day;* and yet it is implied, that he afforded not to poor Lazarus *the crumbs that fell from his table.* Let such unmerciful rich men well weigh the end of that rich man, and be henceforward stirred up to take due notice of a main duty, that lieth upon them, which is to be free and forward, liberal and bountiful, in distributing to the necessities of the poor. It is not sufficient for rich men to do good, unless they be rich in good

works. As your riches are God's seed for you; so your good works are your seed sown for God; as you ought to bring forth a crop answerable to God's seed, so will God give you a crop answerable to your seed. In this respect, saith the apostle, 2 Cor. ix. 6. *He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.* Though God reward none by way of *merit* for their *work's* sake, yet, God will *render to every one according to his deeds*, Rom. ii. 6. So as rich men shall lose nothing by being rich in good works, but rather gain very much thereby.

'It is the great mistake of many, to think, that what they give to the poor is lost; whereas, in truth, it is the best means of increasing their estate.' Prov. xi. 24. saith the wise-man; 'There is that scattereth, and yet encreaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty:' and again, Prov. xix. 17. 'He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, he will pay him again.' Here you have, as I may call it, a bill of God's own hand, in which he doth acknowledge himself a debtor to every merciful man.

CHAP. XVI.

Directions to the Poor.

HAVING given directions to the rich, I come now to give directions to the poorer sort, who stand in as much need as the former.

I. 'Labour to be content with thine estate,' as being that portion God hath allotted unto thee; and repine not against his providence, because thou hast not a larger allowance, which is the counsel of the apostle Paul, 1 Tim. vi. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.*

Q. Wherein doth this contentedness consist?

A. 'In bringing down your minds to your present state and condition.' It is the great mistake of many; to think that contentedness consisteth in abundance, in raising up their estates to such a pitch; conceiving they should then be contented: whereas, indeed, true contentedness consisteth rather in an evenness, and suitableness, and proportion between a man's estate, and his mind; so that, he is the contented man, whose mind and desire lieth level with his estate.

The better to persuade the poorer sort to this duty of contentedness, I shall propound some few considerations.

1. 'That such as have convenient food and raiment, enjoy as much as the richest men on earth:' whereupon, saith the apostle

in the forementioned place, 1 Tim. vi. 8. *Having food and raiment, let us therewith be content.* Though a man possess never so much of this world's goods, yet doth he enjoy no more thereof than himself eateth and weareth; for the rest goeth to others, and is nothing to him. So that, the rich man can have no more real good from his great estate, than his servants have: for, their bellies must be filled, and their backs must be clothed out of his estate as well as his own.

2. 'That every man's estate is ordered by God:' who, as he is the sovereign Lord of heaven and earth, and may do with us what he pleases; so, he is infinite in wisdom, and thereby knoweth what estate is best and most convenient for us, even better than we ourselves; yea, and is rich in mercy and goodness, and, thereby, willing and ready to do that, which in his wisdom, he knoweth to be best and most convenient for us: Which if it were seriously considered, would be a special means to work up our hearts to some measure of contentedness in our meanest estate and condition.

3. 'That riches are great hinderances in the way to heaven;' mark what our Saviour saith, Luke xviii. 24, 25. *How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!* Implying riches to be a great hinderance to mens' salvation. Is it not, then, an evidence of God's love to thee, that he maketh thy way and passage to heaven less difficult and dangerous, than thy rich neighbour's? Surely, when thou comest to die, thou wilt have little cause to complain of thy want of plenty and abundance.

II. 'Labour to be rich in grace.' Yea, the poorer thou art in purse, labour to be the richer in grace, and then thy worldly poverty will be no hinderance to thy spiritual preferment, but rather a furtherance, in that it puts thee into a better capacity; seeing they are the poor of this world, whom the Lord usually makes rich in faith and heirs of his kingdom. And we often read that the poor received the gospel; not only the poor in *spirit*, but the poor in *purse*. And, therefore, though thine outward condition be poor and mean, yet, know, thou art as capable both of grace here, and of glory hereafter, as any whatsoever. Stir up thyself, therefore, by fervent praying, diligent reading, and frequent hearing of the word, to grow in grace, yea, to grow rich in grace, that though thou art poor here, yet thou mayest be an heir of heaven; and, when thou diest, with Lazarus, be received into Abraham's bosom.

III. 'In the greatest wants and exigencies, labour to live by faith in God's providence,' resting confidently upon him for a comfortable supply of all needful, temporal good things. For thine encouragement thereupon, take notice of that gracious promise, Psal. xxxv. 10. 'The young lions do lack and suffer hunger, but, they that seek the Lord, shall not want any good thing.' He doth not say, they shall have *abundance;* but, they shall want *nothing*

that is good for them. And, therefore, said our Saviour, Mat. vi. 25, 26. 'Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your bodies, what ye shall put on: Is not the life more than meat? and the body than raiment? Behold the fowls of the air, for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them: Are ye not much better than they?' Here, our Saviour by several arguments, labours to dissuade his disciples from all distrustful thoughts and cares about their food and raiment, and to persuade them to live by faith in God's providence for the same.

1. The first argument is taken *a majori ad minus, from the greater to the less;* as thus, *God hath given you the greater thing, therefore he will give you the less:* he hath given you *life*, therefore he will not deny *food:* he hath given you a *body*, therefore he will not withhold *raiment.* This argument our Saviour expresseth in these words, *Is not the life more than meat; and the body than raiment?* intimating, that God who hath given you a life and a body, will assuredly provide food and raiment for them, which are less. He hath given you *ten ousian*, your *essence*, or *substance;* therefore he will not withhold *to epiousion, any necessaries appertaining thereunto.*

2. The second argument is taken *a miniora ad majus, from the less to the greater;* and may be thus framed: 'He that provideth for fowls, will much more provide for men: But God provideth for the fowls of the air, therefore much more will he provide for men;' which argument is here amplified and confirmed by two reasons.

1. First, 'From the means of provision *afforded to men*, which the *fowls of the air want.*' For, whereas men plough and sow, and reap, and gather their corn into barns, and, thereby, have means of provision which the fowls of the air want; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; that is, they have not, neither do they use the means of provision which men do; yet are they not unprovided of convenient food; for, God feedeth them. 'Why then should men, who have such means of provision, distrust God's providence, and, thereupon vex and perplex themselves with cares for food, what they shall eat, and what they shall drink, seeing God provideth for the fowls of the air, who have no ordinary means of provision.'

2. From the excellency of men above fowl, expressed in these words, 'are ye not much better than they?' Intimating, that men are much better than the fowls of the air; and, therefore, seeing God provideth for the fowls of the air, much more will he provide for men, especially for his own children. For, who is there that feeds his hawks and his hounds, that will suffer his children to starve for want of convenient food? And, therefore, you have good cause, in all your straits and exigencies, to live by faith in God's providence.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Christian-like Carriage under Reproaches.

I. 'BEWARE of manifesting any distemper or passion under your reproaches.' I deny not, but you may, and ought to be, sensible of the wrong done to your name,' for, as a good name *is as precious ointment*, Cant. i. 3. so, to have an evil name is a great judgment: and, therefore, you ought to be sensible of the wrong done to your name by slanders and reproaches, saying, 'Let men speak of me what they please, I care not, so long as I know mine own innocency;' for though the testimony of your own innocency be a ground of comfort unto you; yet, your care must be, not only to approve yourselves unto God, but also unto men, to be as careful of your good name, as possibly you can; but yet you are not to manifest any distemper or passion upon the reproachful speeches of others against you. For,

1. That will give others just occasion to conclude that you are verily guilty of those things whereof you are reproached.

2. Your distemper and passion will much disquiet your spirit, and indispose you to the right manner of performing any good duty.

II. 'Beware of returning reproach for reproach, or railing for railing,' which is very unbeseeming a Christian, being therein so unlike unto Christ, who, as the apostle Peter speaketh, 1 Pet. ii. 23. *When he was reviled, reviled not again.*

III. 'Seem to take little or no notice of those reproaches, that are cast upon you.' The wise-man saith, Prov. xix. 11. 'it is the glory of a man to pass over a transgression;' *i. e.* 'to seem to take no notice thereof.' And, truly, it is the best kind of revenge you can take of your reproachers; for, there can be no greater vexation to your malicious reproacher, than to see you take little or no notice of his reproaches against you; and, whosoever will make trial, shall find that his adversary is more vexed with his silence, than if he should return like for like.

IV. 'When an evil report is raised of you, be not so much inquisitive who raised it, as to make a good use and sanctified improvement thereof?' To this end know, and consider, that the report raised of you is either true or false; if true, then you may discern the finger of God at your enemies' tongue's end, pointing unto your sins, and calling upon you to humble yourselves for the same: But if the report raised of you be false; yet, you may hearken to it as to a call from God, to look more narrowly over yourselves, lest you be overtaken with that sin, wherewith at the present you are falsely charged: for, God knowing your temper and disposition, happily seeth that you are inclinable thereunto, and therefore suffereth others to charge you therewith, though

falsely, merely for the preventing thereof, that you may not be overtaken therewith. And thus may you make a good use of the falsest and bitterest objections of your adversary against you.

V. 'Labour to walk contrary to what is charged upon you, though falsely.' As, for instance, if you are charged with hypocrisy, that you are no better than hypocrites; labour the more for sincerity, and resolve to perform all you do out of respect to God, more than unto men; if you are charged with pride, carry yourselves the more humbly and lowly, that your humility may appear unto all, and so your conversation give your enemies the lie.

VI. 'Go and spread your reproaches before God in prayer,' as good Hezekiah did the reproaches of Rabshaketh; and make known your case unto him, desiring help and strength from him, to bear them Christian-like, and then you shall not need to doubt of his gracious comfort and support.

CHAP. XVIII.

How to improve Losses, Crosses, and Afflictions.

IN regard that all men, so long as they live here in this world, are subject to manifold losses, crosses, and afflictions; therefore, it is necessary, that I should give you some directions how to carry yourselves in reference thereunto.

The directions are these.

1. When God shall exercise you with any losses, crosses, or afflictions, labour to bear them Christian-like. To that end, observe these rules.

1. 'Bear them sensibly;' the Lord expects we should be sensible of the weight of our afflictions; he would not have us stoicks or stocks, which are not affected with his stripes; but like children, he would have us sensible of the smart of the rod. Thus was Job, chap. i. 20.

There are two extremes whereinto we are very prone to run, in times of afflictions; the one is, a despising of afflictions; the other is a fainting under them: both which are hinted to us by the author to the Hebrews, Heb. xii. 5. 'My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him:' These are the two extremes we are carefully to avoid in times of afflictions.

1. 'Not to despise or slight the chastisement of the Lord,' saying, if God will have my estate, let him have it; if he will have my husband, or wife, or child, let him have them: This is a despising of the chastening of the Lord, a little regarding, yea, a

contemning thereof, as the Greek word implieth, which is very displeasing unto God.

2. Not to faint under our losses, crosses, and afflictions, as when children die, then the spirit of the parent to die also; or when the husband dieth, then the spirit of the wife to die also; this is a fainting under the burden of our afflictions, as if they were unsupportable, not to be endured.

II. If you would bear your afflictions Christian-like, bear them with patience and silence, according to the example of David, who when God laid his hand upon his back, he presently laid his hand upon his mouth; as appeareth by his own expression, *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it*, Psal. xxxix. 9.

This patient, silent bearing of afflictions is opposed to two things.

1. To an inward repining at the dispensations of God towards you.

2. To an inward complaining and murmuring at them; both which you must carefully avoid.

1. 'You must carefully avoid all inward repinings at the dispensation of God's providence towards you;' whatsoever storms are without you, yea, and blow upon you, yet your heart within you should be calm and quiet: what, though the Lord's dealings with you be very sharp? yet you ought not to repine at them, but quietly and silently to submit thereunto, acknowledging the equity of God's proceeding with you; that as he is righteous in all his ways, so, in particular, towards you; and thereupon to say with good old Eli, 1 Sam. iii. 18. *It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good*, and with our blessed Saviour, Luke xxii. 42. *Father, not my will, but thy will be done.* And, if you bear your afflictions thus quietly, you shall bear them with much more ease at present, and find them more profitable in the end.

2. As you must carefully avoid all inward repining, so likewise all outward complaining and murmuring under the sad dispensations of God's providence. As you must not entertain any hard thoughts of God, as if he punished you above your deservings, or more than you are able to bear; so, neither must you express any discontented words against the Lord's dealing with you; for, though a Christian may mourn under sad providences, yet may he not murmur at them; though he may groan, yet not grumble; but quietly bear all losses, crosses, and afflictions, both in opposition to all inward repining, and outward murmuring.

3. If you would bear your afflictions Christian-like, you must bear them willingly and cheerfully.

To help you herein, take these few considerations.

1. 'That no afflictions befal any without the wise ordering providence of God,' as Eliphaz implieth, Job v. 6. 'Affliction cometh not forth of dust, neither doth evil spring out of the ground.'

Truly, there is not a warrant comes to arrest thy body with pain or sickness, but it comes under the hand and seal of thy heavenly Father; there is not a *Habeas Corpus* comes to remove thy yoke-fellow, child, or friend, but it is signed by thy heavenly Father. This consideration hath been a ground of comfort unto the people of God in all their afflictions; 'The Lord,' saith Job, 'hath given, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord,' Job i. 21. And this must needs be a ground of comfort, yea, and joy unto all the people of God, especially if you shall consider in the next place,

2. 'That the end God aims at in your afflictions is to do you good; yea, some special good, that could not be done so well in any other way;' The Lord chasteneth us for our profit, Heb. xii. 10. Every cross will bring with it some blessing or other, if the fault be not in ourselves; yea, the greatest cross will bring the greatest blessing.

3. 'As God doth intend our good thereby, so when it hath effected that good which God intended thereby, he will soon remove your affliction from you:' for, The Lord taketh no delight or pleasure in your pains or sufferings, but *delighteth in mercy*, Mic. vii. 8. and, therefore, will not, neither can he, suffer his afflicting hand to lie longer upon you, than, in his wisdom, he seeth to be needful and necessary, for the effecting of that good, which he intends you thereby; and, therefore if your afflictions seem long unto you, know, they are no longer than needs must, and the good for which God sent them is not yet effected.

4. 'That God will either proportion your afflictions to the measure of your strength, or your strength to the measure of your afflictions;' laying no more upon you than he will enable you to bear; according to that of the apostle, 1 Cor. x. 13. 'God is faithful, and will not suffer you to be tempted above what you are able to bear.'

VI. If you would bear your afflictions Christian-like, you must bear them *fruitfully*, by labouring to make a sanctified use and improvement of them, whereby they will become comfortable blessings unto you; for a sanctified affliction is a great blessing.

Q. What course should I take to have my affliction so sanctified unto me, that I may be able to say with David, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted?* Psalms cxxix. 71.

A. I. 'In every affliction take notice of the displeasure of God against thee;' for, though the Lord doth sometimes afflict his children for the trial and exercise of their graces, rather than for any displeasure he hath conceived against them, as in Job's case it was, yet usually he strikes not till he be provoked by our sins: and therefore it will be thy wisdom in every affliction, to take notice of the displeasure of God against thee.

II. 'Search into thine own heart, and labour to find out the

cause of God's displeasure against thee;' for, it is not for nought that God afflicts thee, something or other is amiss in thee, which God would have amended and reformed; and considering that the Lord doth not only in general correct us for sin, but visiteth our special sins with special judgments and afflictions: therefore, whensoever the Lord visiteth thee with sickness, or exerciseth thee with any affliction, know, it is thy duty to make a strict search, and diligent enquiry into thine own heart, for the special sin or sins God aims at therein, to find out the plague of thine own heart. Thus did the people of God under their sad affliction; yea, they called upon one another to the practice of this duty; *Let us search and try our ways*, said they, Lam. iii. 42. for, as a disease can never be well cured, till the cause thereof be first found out, and discovered; so, neither can any affliction be sanctified and removed, till that which hath occasioned it, be, in some sort, found out, and discovered.

For the better discovery of the particular sin, or sins, God aims at in thine afflictions, take these few rules and directions.

1. When God visiteth thee, or any of thy dear relations, with sickness, or exerciseth thee with any affliction, or doth but shake his rod over thee, set thyself as in his sight and presence, and then examine thy soul and conscience thoroughly, make an exact survey and seach into every corner thereof, to find out the particular sin God aimeth at.

2. Take notice what sin thy conscience doth first bring to thy remembrance: for, conscience is God's deputy to convince thee, and to tell thee, that by living in the practice of such and such a sin, or in the omission of such a duty, thou hast justly brought upon thee such a judgment; as thou mayest see in the example of Joseph's brethren, who, for their cruelty towards their brother, adjudged themselves worthy of all the miseries which they suffered; for, their consciences, it seems, in their distress, chiefly checked them for that; therefore, they had good ground to suspect that to be the cause of their present distress: under every cross and affliction, therefore, listen to the voice of conscience, which will deal impartially with thee.

3. Take special notice of the kind of thine affliction; for, it is God's usual manner to punish sin in kind, by way of retaliation; observing analogy, proportion, and similitude between the quality of the sin, and the punishment which he inflicteth; and so leadeth us, as it were, by the hand; that we may come to find and feel it by his guidance and direction; for, mens punishment often bears the image and superscription of their sin upon it: Thus, God oftentimes punisheth drunkards with dropsies, and covetous men with thieves, who rob them as they have robbed others: Thus, God often punisheth our profaning of his sabbath, by inflicting some judgment upon us at that day; and our careless neglect of

family-duties, by taking away family-relations. Thus, there is oftentimes a proportion between men's practices, and God's punishment; by comparing whereof we may many times come to find out the particular sin, for which God afflicts us.

4. When God's afflicting hand is upon thee, consider for what sin especially thou hast often been reproved, either by the motions of God's Spirit, or by the admonitions of his ministers; or by the checks of thine own conscience, and yet hast refused to reform the same: thereupon suspect that sin in special to be the sin at which the Lord aimeth in thy present affliction; for it is usual with God to proceed from words to blows, to make us give more diligent heed thereunto.

5. Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would help thee in this search, that he would discover and make known unto thee the sin, or sins at what he especially aimeth. Thus did Job x. 2. *Shew me*, saith he, *wherefore thou contendest with me*, for what sin or sins thou dost thus afflict me. And, afterwards, he cries out in his afflictions, *make me to know my transgression, and my sin*, Job xiii. 23. In like manner, do thou, in thine affliction, fly unto God by prayer, beseeching him, to shew unto thee wherefore he doth so contend with thee, and to make known unto thee what is thy transgression and thy sin, that hath provoked his displeasure against thee.

III. 'Having found out the particular sin God aimed at in thine affliction, then go and confess it unto God in prayer with the aggravating circumstances thereof; freely judging and condemning thyself before God for the same, with a broken and contrite heart; to such as confess their sins, there is a promise of forgiveness made, 1 John i. 9. To thy confessions, add earnest and fervent prayer unto God, as for the pardon and forgiveness of thy sins, through the merits of Jesus Christ; so, for reconciliation with that God whom thou hast so much provoked by thy sins. Beg of him, as to love thee freely, so, to receive thee graciously, and not to contend with thee forever.

IV. 'Whereinsoever, upon thine examination, thou findest thyself to have been faulty, thou must endeavour to amend and reform: for, as the end of thy search is, to discover what is amiss in thee, so the end of thy discovery is, to amend and reform what hath been amiss in thee. And, truly, without this, it will little avail thee, to pray unto God for the removal of thine affliction; for, the Lord himself noteth continuance in sin to be the chief cause of the continuance of his hand of affliction upon his people, Isa. ix. 12, 13.

V. 'Though afflictions are special opportunities for spiritual advantage; yet seeing they are not, of themselves, able to work any good in thee, without the special assistance of God's Spirit working together with them, be earnest with God in prayer for a sanc-

tified use and improvement of them;' that, as he doth afflict thee, so, he will teach and instruct thee by his holy Spirit, how to make a good use thereof, to the spiritual advantage of thine own soul. In all thy addresses unto God in prayer; beg of him that no affliction may pass away unsanctified; and pray more for the sanctification of them, than for their removal.

VI. 'In the time of thy affliction vow and promise unto God better obedience for the time to come;' that thou wilt be more careful in the avoiding of those sins, for the commission whereof, and in the performing of those duties, for the omission whereof thy conscience checks thee. David, in Psalm lxvi. 14. speaks of vows which he had made unto God *in the day of his trouble and distress;* and, truly, this vowing unto God newness of life, better obedience, and a greater watchfulness over ourselves for the time to come, is a necessary duty to be oft performed by us, especially in the time of our sickness, and that, in regard of the weakness of our flesh: for howsoever in our sicknesses and afflictions there may be good motions, purposes, and intentions in our minds, yet, through the weakness of our flesh, we are apt to start from them. Now, a promise and vow is a special means to keep us from starting from our good motions and purposes, *Per votum immobiliter voluntas firmatur in bonum.* Aquin. *Sum.* ii. 2. *q.* 88. *art.* 6.

VII. 'Be careful to perform the vows and promises thou makest unto God in the day of thy troubles and distress;' for, by thy vow thou hast bound thyself to performance: and, therefore, saith the wise man, Eccles. v. 4, 5. 'When thou vowest a vow unto God, defer not to pay it: for, he hath no pleasure in fools:' noting it to be egregious folly in any to be forward in making vows unto God, and then, afterwards, to be backward in performing what they vowed.

CHAP. XIX.

How to close the Day with God.

HAVING shewed you how to walk with God all the day long; I come now to shew you how to close the day, and lie down with God in the evening.

The directions may be brought to these heads:

I. 'Such as concern our behaviour in the evening.'

II. 'Such as concern our behaviour at our going to bed.'

I. The directions which concern our behaviour in the evening, are these:

1. 'Withdraw thyself into some secret and retired place, and there look back, and call to mind how thou hast spent the day.'

Consider, how thou hast performed the forementioned duties belonging to the several parts of the day; to that end, put these questions to thyself. As,

1. How did I awake in the morning? Were my morning-thoughts upon the world, and the satisfying my lusts? or upon God; and some of his glorious excellencies?

2. Did I, so soon as I was up, offer unto God my morning sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving; first in secret, and then with my family.

3. After what manner were they performed by me? Did I them out of form and custom? or out of conscience, in obedience to the command of God? did I draw near unto God with my heart, as well as with my body? Did I put forth the strength of my affection in prayer, or was it performed after a cold and formal manner, with much deadness of heart, and distractions of mind?

4. Have I read my portion of scripture this day, or no? Did I do it overly and slightly, or with an holy reverence, as in the sight and presence of God? And, have I meditated on what I read, that so I might the better remember the same?

5. Have I this day been watchful over my thoughts? not suffering any wanton, worldly or vain thoughts to lodge in my heart, but with detestation rejected, and cast them out so soon as they have risen there?

6. Have I been watchful over my words, avoiding all unchaste speeches, and unsavoury discourses, not suffering any corrupt communication to proceed out of my mouth, but that which was good to the edification of others?

7. Have I this day been watchful over all my ways and actions, making God's word my rule, and his glory the chief end and aim of them all? Have I commended all my businesses unto God by prayer, not enterprising any thing without seeking direction, assistance, and a blessing from him? And, have I set God always before me, walking as in his sight and presence?

8. Have I this day wittingly adventured upon the committing of any known sin? Have I thereupon humbled myself before God, and turned unto him by true and unfeigned repentance, or not?

9. Have I seasoned and sanctified my meals with some spiritual communication, and useful discourses; dropping something of the mercy, of the goodness, and bounty of God, that thereby my soul, as well as my body, might be fed and nourished?

10. Have I followed my worldly businesses with spiritual affections, often lifting up my heart unto God in some heavenly ejaculations? And, have I been just and honest in all my dealings with men, abhorring to get any thing by wicked and deceitful courses?

11. What hath been my carriage in *secret?* Have I there let out my heart in contemplative wickedness, by feeding my fancy, and pleasing myself in ambitious, revengeful, lascivious, and oth-

er wicked thoughts? Or, have I improved my privacy, by fixing my thoughts upon some spiritual and heavenly subject, discoursing thereof with myself?

12. What hath been my behaviour in company? Have I trifled away the time in worldly conferences, and sinful discourses, giving too much way to the satisfying of my carnal lusts and pleasures? Or, have I laboured to be fruitful and profitable therein, both to myself and others?

As he is the best tradesman, that every day in the evening taketh an account of his worldly losses and gains; so, he is the best Christian, that every day in the evening taketh an account of his spiritual losses and gains; whether he go forward or backward in the ways of godliness. History tells us of many heathens, who were wont every evening to revise the transactions of the day; as, of Sextus, the Roman Philosopher, of whom it is recorded, that every evening as he was going to bed, he would question his soul, 'What evil he had healed, what vice he had withstood that day, in what regard he was better than before.' An example, worthy our Christian imitation, and a shame it would be to us to fall short of heathens herein.

II. 'Call to mind the passages of God's providences towards thee, and treasure them up in thy heart and memory,' labouring to make a right use of them. The truth is, it is an argument of a profane and irreligious heart, to let the remarkable passages of God's providence pass away without any due observation of them. For, as the Psalmist speaketh, Psalm cxi. 4. The Lord hath so done his marvellous works, that they ought to be had in remembrance: Therefore, it is thy duty, and will be thy wisdom, as in the day to take notice of all the passages of God's providence towards thee; so, in the evening, to call them to remembrance, that they may take the deeper impression upon thee.

III. 'If thou hast been moved unto anger in the day-time, let not the sun go down upon thy wrath,' Eph. iv. 26. whereby the Apostle implieth such a speedy suppression of anger, that it may not sleep with thee; for, saith he, in the next verse, 'This is to give place to the devil;' who, saith Gregory, in the night-season cometh to the angry man in his bed, and setteth before him the greatness of the wrong done unto him, and aggravateth the same, by all the amplifying circumstances thereof, to heighten up his anger to a revenge: therefore saith the apostle, *Let not the sun go down upon your wrath.*

IV. 'Before thou goest to bed, be sure to offer unto God thine evening sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving.' This is hinted unto us under the law, where the Lord required his evening sacrifice, as well as his morning one, Exod. xxix. 38, 39. Therefore, much more doth he require an evening as well as a morning sacrifice, now under the gospel. And, truly, if thou shalt lie down in thy

sins unrepented of, thou mayest haply awake with hell-flames about thine ears: and therefore, far be it from thee to presume to go to thy bed, before thou hast offered unto God thine evening sacrifice of prayer, and therein heartily begged the pardon and forgiveness of all thy sins, in and through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ. Shouldst thou put off the performance of this duty till thou art in thy bed, as the practice of too many is, it is very likely thou wilt fall asleep, before thou hast made any great progress therein; and those prayers which thou makest in thy bed, will prove but drowsy, yawning prayers, at the best: therefore be sure to offer up thine evening sacrifice before thou goest into thy bed; and, if conveniently thou canst before supper; for, by experience we find that our bodies are much drowsy, and our spirits much more dead and heavy after supper than before.

Having shewed thee the duties to be performed by thee in the evening, before thy going to bed; I come now to the duties to be performed by thee at thy lying down.

1. 'Take all occasions of holy and heavenly meditations:' To this end, as thou art putting off thy cloaths, think how it will not be long before thou be stripped of all, and go out of the world as naked as thou camest into it: which Job excellently expresseth, Job i. 21. *Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither;* not into his mother's womb again, for that is impossible; but to the grave, the womb of the earth, and common mother of all: so that the meaning is, I shall go out of the world, as I came into it. Hence death is called an uncloathing, (2 Cor. v. 4.) because it strips a man of all his ornaments, not only of his apparel, but also of his honour, wealth and riches.

2. How should the consideration thereof stir thee up to labour for the true riches and spiritual cloathing? I mean, the saving graces of God's Spirit, and the robe of Christ's righteousness, and then thou shalt not go out naked, but adorned and enriched.

3. Again, as thou art laying thyself down in thy bed, let thy bed mind thee of thy grave, thy sheets mind thee of thy winding-sheet, and thy sleep mind thee of death; for death is but a kind of sleep: sleep is a short death, and death is a long sleep. Hence sleep and death are often put the one for the other in scripture; and death is often set out by sleep, Deut. xxxi. 16. Dan. xii. 2. John xi. 12.

4. As thou art going to sleep, commend thyself both soul and body, with thy relations, into the arms of God's protection, knowing that they are safe whom the Lord keepeth: and then labour to fall asleep as thou art meditating of some good thing: for so will thy sleep be more sweet, thy dreams more comfortable, and thine heart in a better plight when thou awakest.

CHAP. XX.

Directions for sanctifying the Lord's Day.

HAVING shewed you how to walk with God on the week-days; I shall now shew you how to walk on the Sabbath-day, so far as it may prove a comfortable day unto you. To this end I shall,

1. 'Give you some grounds for the change of the Sabbath, from the last day of the week to the first; proving our Lord's-day to be the true Sabbath.'

2. 'Give you directions how to sanctify the same.'

3. 'Add some motives to quicken you up to conscionable observations of the directions.'

Grounds for the change of the Sabbath, from the last day of the week to the first, are briefly these:

1. 'Divine institution,' even the institution of Christ himself; which appeareth two ways.

1. 'By the title given to the first day of the week:' namely, the *Lord's-day;* for, whatsoever in holy writ is said to be the *Lord's* denominatively, of that Christ is the author and institutor. As for instance, the *Lord's supper;* because he instituted it. The *people of the Lord*, because he chose them: the *Lord's messengers*, because he sends them. Upon the same ground, the first day of the week is denominatively called the *Lord's day;* and that not by creation, for, so every day is from the beginning; but by divine institution, because it was instituted by Christ the Lord, for divine worship and service, and for the memorial of the great work of redemption wrought by him. Agreeable hereunto is that of St. Augustin, who saith, That the apostles appointed the *Lord's day* to be kept with all religious solemnity, because on that day our Redeemer rose from the dead; and therefore is called the *Lord's day. Dominicum diem Apostoli religiosa solemnitate habendum sanxerunt; quia in eodem Redemptor noster a mortuis resurrexit, quique, ideo, Dominicus appellatur*, Aug. Serm. 151. de Tempore.

2. 'By the practice of the apostles, who constantly assembled together on the first day of the week;' which is our *Lord's day;* and that, without doubt, upon the command of Christ himself: for, whereas he continued forty days on earth after his resurrection, before he ascended into heaven; it is said, in 'that time he gave commandments unto his apostles, and spake unto them of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God,' Acts i. 2, 3. that is, he instructed them how they should change the bodily sacrifices of beasts, into the spiritual sacrifices of prayer and praises: the sacrament of circumcision, into the sacrament of baptism; the sacra-

ment of the passover, into the sacrament of the Lord's supper. And then, likewise, he instructed his apostles touching the change of the Sabbath into the Lord's day. To which agreeth that of learned Junius, who saith positively, 'That the change of the Sabbath was not by the tradition of men, but by the observation and appointment of Christ;' who, both on the day of his resurrection, and on every seventh day after, until his ascension into heaven, appeared to his disciples, and came into their assemblies. Hereupon, we read, the apostles met together on every first day of the week to preach the word, and to communicate the Lord's supper; as John xx. 19. 26. Acts ii. 1. Acts xx. 7. and in divers other places. And we find it expressly ordained by the apostle Paul, that the weekly collection for the poor should be on that day, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. 'Now concerning the collection of the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week, let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him,' *&c.* And why on that day? Surely no other reason can be well imagined, but, that their assembling together, to partake of the ordinances of God, was wont to be on that day; and therefore, because works of charity suit well with duties of piety, and that by the ordinances then dispensed, they might be stirred up to a more free and cheerful contribution; the Apostle ordained also, that the collections for the poor should be on the same day, *viz.* the first day of the week.

II. 'Another argument proving the first day of the week, commonly called the *Lord's day*, to be the true Christian Sabbath, now under the gospel, may be taken from the constant practice of the church, and people of God, since the Apostles times.' As I have shewed you, that it was the practice of the Apostles to observe the first day of the week, which is argument enough to warrant the day, they being guided by the Spirit of Christ in an especial manner: so, it doth clearly appear, that it hath been the practice of all holy men, since the Apostles times, to observe this day, and that under the name of, the Lord's day. Ignatius, who lived in St. John's time, saith, *Omnis Christi amator Dominicum celebret diem, reginam, & principem dierum omnium*, Ignatius, Epist. 3. *ad Magnes.* that is, 'Let every one that loveth Christ, keep holy the *Lord's day*, which is the queen of days.' And Eusebius in his ecclesiastical history, *lib.* 4. *cap.* 22. plainly shews how the the church and people of God in several ages after the apostles times, observed the first day of the week, as instituted by Christ, and ordained afterwards by the apostles. I might spend much paper, in shewing how this day hath been observed in all ages, from the apostles times to these days. Now the constant custom of the church is not to be slighted. That expression of the apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 16. *If any man seem to be contentious, we have*

such custom, neither the churches of God, sheweth that the custom of the church is a matter to be regarded.

III. 'The resurrection of Christ both giveth a ground for the sanctifying of our Christian Sabbath; and likewise sheweth a reason for the changing of the day:' for the work of redemption wrought by Christ, being far more excellent than the work of creation, did much more deserve a weekly memorial. That the work of redemption was more excellent, appears, in that it cost more to redeem the world of God's elect, than to create the whole world. For, to create the world, it cost God but a word, as it were; he but spake the word, and it was done, Psalm cxlviii. 5. But to redeem the world of God's elect, it cost no less than the precious blood of the Son of God: so that this work hath swallowed up the former, as the *temple* did the *tabernacle*. And we who live after Christ's resurrection, are as much bound to the celebration of the first day of the week, as they who lived before, to the last.

It is very observable, that a seventh day hath been observed to the honor of God, even since the creation; and such a Seventh, as never a week in the alteration was without a sabbath, and never a week had two sabbaths; for as the week ended with the former sabbath, so, the next week began with our sabbath; which could not have been, if any other seventh day had been chosen.

If any shall ask, Why the change of the day is not more clearly expressed in the New Testament? I answer, Because there was no question moved about the same in the apostles times. Which may likewise serve as a reason, why in the New Testament, there is no express command for the baptizing of infants in particular; namely, because there was no question moved about the same in the apostles times.

II. 'Having given you some grounds for the change of the sabbath, from the last day of the week to the first.'

Come we now to the directions how to sanctify the Lord's day.

To the sanctification whereof, two things are required.

1. 'An observing of a rest.'

2. 'A consecrating that rest wholly to the worship and service of God.'

I. 'There must be a resting, and that from several things.' As,

1. 'From all the ordinary works of our calling,' which is expressly set down in the commandment, Exod. xx. 9, 10. 'Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God, in it thou shalt not do any work,' *viz.* of thy calling. And let not any pretend the greatness of their charge, as a plea for their working; for, know assuredly, that what you get that day by your labor, will contribute little towards your charge: for, whatsoever is got on that day,

will not be blessed of the Lord; but will prove like Achan's wedge of gold, which, being got contrary to the command of God, brought the fire of God's curse upon all the rest, which he had lawfully gotten.

2. 'From all kind of recreations,' especially such as tend to carnal and sensual delight; which, though they may be lawful at other times, yet, are unlawful on the Lord's day, being as expressly forbidden by God himself, as the works of our calling, as you shall find in Isa. lviii. 13. where the Lord requires of his people, 'That they turn their feet from doing their own pleasures on his holy day; and that they call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord honourable; and honour him, not doing their own ways, nor finding their own pleasures.' And it is found by experience, that recreations do more steal away our affections from heavenly meditations, and distract us in God's service, than the works of our calling. Whereupon St. Augustin, *Quanto melius est arare, quam sultare in sabbato?* Aug. Enarrationem tituli, Ps. xci. 'How much better is it to plough on the Lord's day than to dance?'

3. 'From all immoderate eating and drinking,' whereby we are fitter to sleep, than to attend upon the ordinances of God. And therefore, how blame-worthy are they, who make the Lord's day a day of feasting their neighbours and friends? For, though it be lawful upon this day to make such provision as shall be convenient for our own families, and for the relief of our poor neighbours; yet, to make solemn feasts upon this day (as is the custom of too many) whereby servants are kept from public ordinances, and ourselves and guests are more indisposed to the duties of God's worship and service, must needs be unlawful. And therefore, though we be not forbidden upon the Lord's day to kindle a fire for the dressing of meat, yet, we must take heed, that we make not such a flame, as shall kindle the fire of God's wrath against us.

4. 'From all worldly words, and discoursing of earthly affairs.' 'Not speaking thine own words,' saith the Prophet, Isa. li. 13. which imports, talking and discoursing of worldly matters on the sabbath day. For, where the Lord hath commanded the whole man to rest from worldly works, there he commands, as the hand to rest from working, so, the tongue from talking of worldly matters. But, in the fourth commandment, the Lord hath commanded the whole man to rest from worldly works. Exod. xx. 10. where he saith, *Thou shalt do no manner of work*, &c. Therefore, he commands the tongue to rest from talking of worldly matters, as well as the hand from working of servile and worldly works. How blame-worthy then are they, who make the Lord's day a reckoning day with work-men and servants, or, at least a visiting-day amongst their friends and neighbours, and so consequently, a day of idle tattle about their profit, pleasures, or other mens' matters?

5. 'As from worldly words, so, from worldly thoughts, as much as we can. For,

1. 'Know that every commandment extends to our very thoughts, binding them as well as the outward actions.' As for example: The sixth commandment, from murderous thoughts, as well as from the act of murder: The seventh from adulterous and lustful thoughts, as well as from the act of adultery: The eighth, from covetous thoughts, as well as from the act of covetousness.

2. 'Know that the Lord requireth not only the outward man, and external actions, to be consecrated unto him, but especially the inward man.' In which regard we ought, as much as possibly we can, to sequester our thoughts from worldly matters, that they may be wholly taken up with spiritual and heavenly meditations.

6. 'There is another rest expected from every one on the Lord's day, and that is, a resting from sin;' which we ought to do, as much as in us lieth, at all times; but especially on the Lord's day, which ought to be kept as an holy rest. And truly, we cannot offer unto God a greater indignity, than to serve the devil in the works of darkness on the Lord's day; which is consecrated to the honour and service of God.

Thus much of the first particular, requisite to the sanctification of the Lord's day; namely *an observing of a rest.*

II. Come we now to the second, *viz.* 'A consecrating that rest wholly to the worship and service of God.' For it is not enough that we keep a rest, but we must keep an holy-rest; barely to rest on the Sabbath day, is but a Sabbath of beasts. *We must remember the sabbath day to keep it holy.* For this is the chief end whereunto the outward rest tendeth.

Now the consecration of the Sabbath rest consists,

1. In our preparation thereunto.

2. In a conscionable performance of those duties, the Lord then requireth of us; which may be brought to two heads, *viz.*

1. 'Duties of piety.'

2. 'Works of mercy.'

Duties of piety are of three sorts: 1. Public. 2. Private. 3. Secret. The which, because they are interchangeably mixed with one another; therefore I shall interchangeably speak of them.

The duties to be performed, by way of preparation, are these,

1. 'Remember the day before-hand,' to the end you may so order and dispose of your worldly affairs, that they may be dispatched in convenient time on the eve of the Sabbath, that so both yourselves and servants may go to bed in such time, that your bodies may be well refreshed with sleep, and your minds fitted for the duties of the day. This the Lord intimateth in the beginning of the fourth commandment, saying, *Remember to keep holy the sab-*

bath day. Where, by remembering it, may be meant, a 'minding it before-hand.' How blame-worthy then are they, who sit up themselves, and keep up their servants so late in the night before the Sabbath, that they are obliged to lie longer in their beds than ordinary, on the sabbath-day! yea, and when they are come into the congregation, are fitter to sleep than to hear. *Is this to remember the sabbath day to keep it holy?*

2. 'At your first awaking in the morning, lift up your hearts to God in prayer and thanksgiving,' for that comfortable rest and sleep he hath vouchsafed unto you the night past: for it is *he that giveth his beloved sleep;* and who *reneweth his mercy every morning.* And then, beg of God the assistance of his Spirit, to carry you through all the duties of the day.

3. 'Rise early on the sabbath day.' For, in regard there are, as secret duties of piety, to be performed by you in your closets, so, private duties of piety in and with the family (if you live in a family) before you go to the public congregation: ye ought to rise so early, that you may have convenient time for these duties; and be at the public assembly at the beginning of the exercises. How blame-worthy then are they, who on the week-days can rise betimes to follow their worldly businesses, but on the Lord's day do lie longer in bed than ordinarily, giving themselves up to their carnal ease and rest; 'Is this to keep holy the Sabbath day,' thus to sleep away the first and chiefest part thereof?

4. 'In your rising, let your hearts be in a serious meditation of Jesus Christ,' and of the great things he hath done and suffered for you; and of the many good things whereof in and through him, you are made partakers.

5. 'So soon as you are up and ready, withdraw yourselves into some private place, and there read some portion of the scriptures, which will be an excellent means to season your hearts, and compose your minds; yea, hereby you will be the better prepared to hear the word preached, and the better enabled to try the doctrines delivered.

6. 'As prayer is a duty to be performed every morning, so, especially on the Lord's morning;' which is in some measure to be suitable thereunto. Having, therefore, confessed your sins, and begged the pardon of them, together with power against them, and grace to serve God; then pray both for the minister, and for yourselves.

1. 'For the minister,' that God would give him a door of utterance, that he may open his mouth boldly to publish the mysteries of the gospel; yea, that he may speak the word truly, sincerely, powerfully, and profitably, delivering that which is suitable and seasonable to your condition.

2. 'For yourselves,' that God would banish out of your head all worldly wandering thoughts, which may distract your minds in

the hearing of the word, and choaking that heavenly seed, and make it fruitless; and, that he would give unto you, as attention to hearken, so, understanding to conceive, wisdom to apply, judgment to discern, faith to believe, memory to retain, and grace to practise what you shall hear; that so the word may prove unto you a 'savour of life unto life, and not a savour of death unto death.'

These two last duties of 'reading the word, and prayer,' are not only to be performed alone in secret, but likewise with your families, if so be, you be parents or masters of families. And, therefore, before you go to the public ordinances call your family together, and pray with them; as for other things, so, especially for the influence of God's grace, and the income of his Spirit upon your hearts and spirits, in the holy duties you shall take in hand, that so you may perform them after such a manner, as glory may redound to God's name, and some spiritual good and advantage to your own souls.

These are the duties to be performed by way of preparation.

Having thus fitted and prepared yourselves,

1. 'Call your family together, your children and servants, and take them along with you to the public congregation;' and let Joshua's resolution be oft in your mind; *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*, Josh. xxiv. 15.

2. 'As you are going, consider whither you are going,' *viz.* not to a fair or market, but to the house of God, where God himself is present to behold you, yea, where God himself speaketh by the mouth of his ministers.

3. 'Being come into God's house, set yourselves as in the sight and presence of God,' who not only observeth your outward carriage and behaviour; but likewise understandeth all the imaginations of your hearts, and is privy to every wandering thought, in praying, hearing, and other holy duties; which will be a special means to keep your minds from roving after other matters.

Besides public duties, there are both private and secret duties of piety required to the true sanctification of the Lord's day, of which you ought to be as careful and conscionable, as of the public duties in the public congregation. For, God requires the whole day, and not a part only. As therefore, you would not be contented, your servants should work for you only an hour or two on each of the six days; so, neither should you yield less unto God, than you require for yourselves.

By private duties of piety, I mean, such as are performed in a private family: and, by secret, such as are done in some secret and retired place, between God and one's self alone.

Now the PRIVATE duties of piety, which are especially required of such, who are parents and masters of families; and wherein every member therein are to join, are these.

I. 'Repeating the sermons they have heard with their family,' and examining them one after another, what they remember, explaining the same unto them; which is commended to us by the practice of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, when he was come home said unto his disciples, Matt. xiii. 51. *Have ye understood all these things? viz.* what he had preached to the multitude. And, St. Mark saith, Mark iv. 34. *When they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.* Whereupon, one observeth, that Christ by his example, doth instruct every master of a family, how to carry himself in reference to those under his charge on the Lord's day, after the departure from the public congregation, *Chemnit. Exemp. cap de dieb. fest.*

A treble benefit will follow hereupon.

1. 'In respect of yourselves;' for the more you built up others, the more yourselves are built up in knowledge, faith, and every grace of God.

2. 'In respect of your children and servants;' for it will make them to hearken more attentively to that which is delivered in the public congregation, if they know they shall be called to an account for the same, when they come home.

3. 'It would much help both yourselves and servants in the understanding,' and believing of that which you have heard in the public, if at home you would repeat it, and confer of it, and examine the proofs that have been delivered for the confirmation of it.

II. 'Another private duty, is singing of *Psalms*;' for this may and ought to be performed in your families, as well as in the congregation. This David commended for one duty of the Sabbath; as Psalm xcii. 1. The title of the Psalm is, 'A psalm or song for the Sabbath day.' And thus it begins; 'It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, to sing praises unto thy name, O most High.'

For the manner of performing this duty, the apostle, (Col. iii. 16.) giveth us these directions, in these words, 'Singing with grace in your hearts, to the Lord.'

1. 'First, Therefore, it must be in the heart, or with the heart;' that is our hearts must go with our voices, the one must we lift up as well as the other: for, God is a Spirit, and therefore, will be worshipped with our hearts and spirits, as well as with our bodies. And truly, singing with the voice, without the concurrence of the heart and spirit, is no more pleasing unto God, than a sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal.

2. 'As we must sing with the heart, so, with grace in the heart;' that is, we must exercise the graces of God's holy Spirit in singing, as well as in praying; laboring to express the same affection in singing the psalm, as David did in penning it. As, if it be a psalm of *confession*, then to express some hu-

mility, and brokenness of heart and spirit in singing. If it be a psalm of prayers and petitions, then must our affections be fervent. If a psalm of praises and thanksgiving, then must our heart be cheerful. And thus must the affection of the heart be ever suitable to the quality of the psalm.

III. 'Another private duty to be performed with the family, is *prayer*.' For, if this duty ought to be performed every day, twice, at least, *viz.* in the morning and evening, then especially on the Lord's day, which the Lord hath wholly consecrated to his worship and service.

IV. 'Reading the scriptures is another duty, to be performed in and with our family,' that so they may be acquainted with the body of the scriptures; yea, and with the precepts and promises, the directions and consolations of the word, for their directions and comforts.

Besides the public and private, there are likewise SECRET *duties*, to be performed by every one alone in their closets or chambers; which are briefly these.

1. 'Reading some part of God's word, or other good books.'

2 'Meditating of what you have heard or read that day;' which is an excellent means to make the word both read and preached, profitable to you. For, as meat, though it be never so wholesome, nourisheth us not, if it be not concocted, and digested; so it is with the word of God, the food of your souls, if it be not by meditation concocted and digested, it will nothing at all profit us; but being by meditation digested, it will then prove effectual to the nourishing our souls.

3. 'Examining yourselves,' as of your former life and conversation, so, especially of your carriage the last week, and of the manner of performing the duties of the day. And, as you should be humbled for your failing therein; so, you should resolve with the assistance of God's grace, to be more watchful over yourselves, for the time to come; and to be more careful in sanctifying the Lord's day, by a conscionable manner of performing the duties thereof.

4. 'Praying unto God,' is another duty to be performed by you in secret, as well as publicly and privately; yea, you should double and treble your prayers on the Lord's day. Under the law, we read, how the Lord required double sacrifice on the sabbath day. For, besides the daily sacrifices, two lambs more were appointed to be offered upon the sabbath-day, four in all, to shew the holiness of the day, Numb. xxviii. 9, 10. In like manner, ought you to double your spiritual sacrifices of prayers and praises on the Lord's day, earnestly beseeching him for Christ's sake, to pardon as your sins in general; so, in special, the manifold infirmities and imperfections, which have passed from you, in the performance of your holy services; and to enable you by his Spirit,

to perform them for the time to come, with more life and vigour, with more fervency and affection.

Having thus shewed you both the public, private, and secret duties of piety. to be performed on the Lord's day;

Come we now to the works of mercy, which is another head of duties, that ought to be performed on that day. And, because man consists of two parts, *viz.* of soul and body, and both of them are subject to many maladies; therefore, the works of mercy, may be brought to these two heads.

I. 'Such as concern the soul.'

II. 'Such as concern the body of your neighbour.'

I. The works of mercy, which concern the soul of your neighbour, are these, and such like:

1. *To instruct the ignorant*, in points of doctrine needful and necessary to be known.

2. 'To draw sinners to repentance,' by setting before them, as the severity of God's justice against all impenitent sinners; so, the freeness of his grace, and riches of his mercy, to all penitent sinners.

3. 'To comfort such as are comfortless,' through an apprehension of the number and heinousness of their sins, by setting before them, the all-sufficiency of Christ's sacrifice; and the gracious offers in the gospel, to all who find their sins a burden to them.

4. 'To reprove and rebuke such as are scandalous and offensive in their ways.'

5. 'To resolve the doubtful.'

6. 'To strengthen and establish such as are weak in grace.'

By a conscionable performance of these; the poorest that are, may be rich in good works.

II. The works of mercy, which concern the body of our neighbour, are these, and such like:

1. 'Visiting the sick, and such as are otherwise restrained of liberty.

2. 'Relieving such as are in want.' The apostle in 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. injoining the Corinthians to lay up something in store, every first day of the week (which is the Lord's day) implieth, that it is a very fit season, not only to do such works of mercy, which are then offered unto us; but also, to prepare for other times. And, surely, if every one would, every Lord's day, set apart something out of his comings-in that week, for a stock to give to charitable uses, much good might be done thereby. For, as men, by this means, will have more to give, than otherwise they will find in their hearts to do on the week-days; so, they will give more bountifully, and more willingly, because the stock out of which they give, is prepared before-hand, and (it being a sacred stock, by their voluntary setting it a part to such an use) the conscience will account it sacrilege to lay it out any other way. If poor men,

that live by their day's labour, and servants that live by their wages, would, every lord's day, lay up some half-pennies, or pence, for this end and purpose, they might have, without any sensible damage to themselves, a stock for the poor: How much greater stock, would be for the poor, if rich men, according to God's blessing on them, would so do?

Besides these duties of piety, and works of mercy, which are commanded to de done on the Lord's day, there are some things which the Lord permits unto us, in regard of the weakness and infirmities of our bodies, *viz.* sleep, food, and apparel. Because we cannot, with strength and delight, spend the whole day in sabbath-duties, without competent rest, food and apparel; therefore, it is lawful for us to spend some time, as, in sleep, so in apparelling ourselves, and in refreshing our bodies with food, which, otherwise would be ready to faint: But, by a moderate use of these, we are enabled to do the things we take in hand, the more cheerfully.

But, herein, two cautions ought carefully to be observed.

1. 'You must spend no more time about them than is requisite.' Wherefore, your bodies being refreshed with moderate sleep, you ought to get up early on the Lord's day, as about six or seven of the clock, and to use all possible speed, in dressing yourselves, and not to sit longer than is requisite, at your meals; that so you may have the more time for the duties of God's worship and service on his day. And truly, since the Lord is so good and gracious unto you, as to afford you some part of his own day for the refreshment of your bodies, far be it from you to abuse his goodness, by lavishing away more time than is needful.

2. Second caution: 'Do them as the sabbath-day works;' which is done two ways.

1. 'By doing them for this end, that, thereby, you may be the better enabled to serve God.' Thus, when, at your lying down the evening before the sabbath, you desire God to give you quiet, and comfortable sleep, that, thereby, your weak bodies may be refreshed, and you the better enabled to serve him the next day in the duties of his worship and service; this is a sabbath's sleep. In like manner, when you eat and drink, for this very end, that your bodies may be refreshed, and your spirits revived, and you, thereby, the better enabled, with cheerfulness, to serve God the remaining part of the day; this is a sabbath day's eating and drinking.

2. 'By raising Spiritual and heavenly meditations from the same.' At your first awaking, you should call to mind what day it is; and, having blessed God for your comfortable rest and sleep that night, you should beg of him the special assistance of his grace, to carry you through all the duties of the day. When you are rising out of your beds, you should think, as, of the resurrection

of Christ's body out of his grave early on that day, so, likewise, of the resurrection of your souls here, out of the death of sin, to the life of holiness; and of your bodies, at the last day, out of the grave of the earth to the life of glory in heaven. In your apparelling yourselves, you should then think of the long white robe of Christ's righteousness, and of the happiness of those who have an interest therein. When you are washing your hands and faces, then from the cleansing virtue of the water, you should take occasion to meditate on the cleansing virtue of Christ's blood, which alone washeth your souls from the filthy spots and stains of sin. When you go to your tables to partake of God's good creatures, your corporal food for the nourishment of your bodies should minister occasion of meditating on his spiritual food of your souls, whereby they are nourished unto everlasting life. The bread on your tables should mind you of Jesus Christ, who is 'the bread of life that came down from heaven' to quicken your dead souls. Thus, from every thing, should you endeavor to draw matter of spiritual and heavenly meditation, labouring to keep your hearts in an holy frame all the day long. What our Saviour said to his disciples concerning the loaves and the fishes, *Gather up the fragments, let nothing be lost:* The like he seemeth to speak unto you concerning the Lord's day, 'gather up the parcels thereof, let no part of the day be lost, no not the least minutes, which are precious, as the least filings of gold.'

As the Lord doth permit unto you some things which your weak bodies stand in need of, that, thereby, you may be better enabled to serve him on his day: So, he is pleased to allow some things to be done by you, even on his day, though they hinder the performance of the proper work of it: and they are such things as are of *absolute necessity.*

Q. If you ask, what I mean by works of *absolute necessity?*

A. Such as must needs be done, and yet could not be done the day before the sabbath, nor put off to the day after, without great and sensible inconvenience. But on the other side, such things, as do, no way, further the sanctification of the day, but, rather, hinder the same, and may as well be done the day before, or the day after or some other time, ought not to be done on the Lord's day.

Having thus done with the directions for the right sanctification of the Lord's day;

III. Come we now to the *motives* to quicken you up to a conscionable observation of those directions.

1. 'A right sanctification of the Lord's day maketh much to the honour of God.' Mark what the Lord himself saith to his church in this case by his prophet Isaiah, chap. lviii. 13. 'If thou turn away thy foot from the sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day, and call the sabbath a delight, the Holy of the Lord.

honourable, and shalt honour him.' Here it is expressly said, that, by a right sanctifying of the sabbath, we honour God.

2. 'A right sanctification of the sabbath is profitable to yourselves; and that in a double respect.'

1. In regard of your outward temporal estate.

2. In regard of your inward spiritual estate.

1. 'The sanctification of the sabbath is profitable in regard of your outward temporal estate:' For, the more conscionable any man is in sanctifying the sabbath-day, the greater blessing he may expect from God upon his labour on the six days: For, it is not your own labour and toiling, *but the blessing of God that maketh rich*, Prov. x. 12.

2. The sanctification of the sabbath will be profitable *in regard of your inward and spiritual estate:* For, this was one main end why the sabbath was ordained, namely, that God might, by it, in the use of his ordinances, enrich our souls with spiritual blessings in heavenly things. And, accordingly, the sanctification of the sabbath is an especial means both to beget grace, and to strengthen grace: For, the Lord hath ordained it to be a market-day to the soul. And, truly, were we but as sensible of the good of our souls, as we are of our bodies, the best husbands that be, should not more diligently keep market-days, and fair-days, than we would the Lord's-day.

3. 'A right sanctification of the sabbath, is very delightful to the people of God,' in that they do enjoy intimate society and communion with God in his ordinances on that day, which is the greatest happiness poor creatures can possibly attain unto in this life, it being an heaven upon earth to enjoy communion with God; and some degree of those heavenly joys which we shall enjoy hereafter, more fully in heaven. How should the consideration hereof stir you up to a careful, conscionable sanctifying of the Lord's day, that so you may taste of those sweet comforts and refreshments which others have so plentifully enjoyed?

4. 'The sanctification of the sabbath will exceedingly promote the life of godliness all the week following.' This is a certain truth; That he who makes no conscience to keep holy the sabbath-day, will make little conscience of keeping any of the other commandments, so he may do it without discredit to his reputation, or danger of man's law. But look how a man is careful and conscionable in the performance of the duties of piety to God on the sabbath-day: in like manner is he careful and conscionable in the performance both of the duties of holiness to God, and of righteousness towards his neighbour on the week-days.

5. 'Another motive may be taken from the equity of sanctifying this day;' in that the Lord hath afforded unto us six days in seven for our own work, and reserved to himself but one for his worship and service, whereas, he might have required six days

for his worship and afforded us but one for our work: Is it not most just and equal, that we should make conscience of giving unto God his day, by consecrating it wholly to his worship and service? As Joseph said to Potiphar's wife when she tempted him to uncleanness, 'My master, hath not kept back any thing from me, but thee, because thou art his wife; how then can I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Gen. xxxix. 9. In like manner, say thou to thy vain companions, when thou art tempted any way to profane the sabbath; 'God, the sovereign Lord and master of the world, hath kept back no time from me, but one day, because it was his: How then can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?'

CHAP. XXI.

Directions for the worthy receiving of the Lord's Supper.

TO the worthy partaking of the sacrament of the Lord's supper; there are three sorts of duties required.

1. 'Duties antecedent;' that is, such as must go before the sacrament.

2. 'Duties concomitant;' that is, such as must accompany the action of receiving.

3. 'Duties subsequent;' that is, such as must follow after.

I. 'For the duties antecedent,' though they are many, yet, they may be all brought under this one head of *examination*, which is not only commanded by the Apostle, 1 Cor. xi. 28. *Let a man examine himself; and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup;* but, urged and pressed upon us with greater severity, than any precept in the book of God: For, saith the apostle in the same place, *He that*, through a neglect of this duty of examination, *eateth and drinketh unworthily.*

1. 'He is guilty of the body and blood of Christ,' ver. 27.

2. 'He eateth and drinketh damnation to himself,' ver. 29.

1. 'To be guilty of the body and blood of Christ,' is, in some measure, to have our hands in his bloody death and passion; and so, by consequence, to be partners with Judas in betraying him, with the scribes and pharisees in accusing him, with Pilate in condemning him, and with the cruel soldiers in crucifying him. As, therefore, thou wouldst not be found guilty of this horrid and dreadful sin; put in practice the apostle's counsel; namely, to 'examine thyself, before thou presumest to partake of that ordinance.'

2. 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself;' so our translators render it: but the

word in the Greek, translated *damnation*, may as well signify *temporal chastisements*, as *eternal punishment*: for, it is *krima*, *non katakrima*.

And, questionless, as hypocrites and unbelievers, while they eat and drink unworthily, eat and drink damnation to themselves, if they repent not; so, also, such as are faithful and sincere Christians, when they, through infirmity and negligence, do partake of this ordinance unworthily, incur thereby temporal judgments; as sickness, weakness, and sometimes death itself. For, saith the Apostle (1 Cor. xi. 30.) speaking of the believing Corinthians, who had not prepared themselves, as they should, to that ordinance, 'For this cause many are weak, and sickly among you, and many sleep or die.' For what cause? namely, because they received the sacrament unworthily, and irreverently, without any preparation, or examination of themselves. I grant, the best men cannot be said, in themselves to be worthy to partake of this ordinance; yet, if thou beest a believing Christian, and dost sincerely endeavour to receive it in that manner, and with such affections as the Lord doth require of thee, thou mayest be said (how unworthy soever thou art otherwise) to be a worthy receiver.

Having thus shewed the *necessity* of the duty of *examination*, come we now to the extent thereof, which may be brought to two heads, *viz.*

1. 'Thy graces.'
2. 'Thy sins.'

First, 'Thou must examine thyself of thy graces,' more especially of thy *knowledge*, *faith*, *repentance*, and *love*.

Touching *knowledge*, I shall shew,

1. 'What *knowledge* is required of every worthy communicant.'
2. 'The necessity.'
3. 'The trial thereof.'

1. For the first, What knowledge is required?

I answer in general, 'Knowledge of all the fundamental principles of religion.'

In particular, 'Knowledge of the doctrine of the sacrament.'

Fundamental principles of religion, are such as our salvation is founded upon, without the knowledge whereof, a man cannot be saved; and they are these;

'That there is a God.' That there is but one God: That that only true God is distinguished into three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, all equally God. That that God is Creator and Governor of all things. That all things were made good by him, and are still governed by him righteously. That man in particular, was made perfectly righteous by him. That man continued not long in his happy estate, but fell by his transgressing the commandment of God, and eating the forbidden fruit. That we are guilty of Adam's sin, being in his loins when he committed that sin. That

every one of us brought into the world corrupted and polluted natures, natures as full of sin, as a toad is of poison. That unto this original corruption, we have added a numberless number of actual transgressions, and that in evil thoughts, evil words, and evil deeds. That by our sins, we have made ourselves liable to the wrath of God, to the curse of the law, to all judgments and plagues here, and to eternal death and condemnation hereafter. That no man can free himself out of that miserable condition, whereinto by sin he hath plunged himself, neither can any mere creature help him. That God out of his free grace and rich mercy, did send his own Son out of his bosom into the world, to take our nature upon him, that therein he might become our Surety and Redeemer. That Christ was both God and man in one person. That he was conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the virgin Mary. That he died upon the cross, to save his people from their sins. That he rose again the third day from the dead, ascended into heaven, sits at the right hand of God, and makes continual intercession for us. That by faith we are made partakers of Christ, and of the benefits of his death and passion. That faith is the gift of God, wrought in us by the Spirit of God, through the ministry of the word, whereby we receive Christ upon the terms of the gospel; and rest upon him alone for the pardon of our sins, for eternal life and salvation. That it hath pleased God to make with us, in and through Christ, a new covenant of grace, wherein he hath promised the pardon of our sins, and the salvation of our souls, upon the condition of faith and repentance.

Particular principles concerning the sacrament of the Lord's supper, are these:

That it was ordained by Christ himself, as a memorial of his great love, in offering up his life a sacrifice for our sins. That this, as well as the sacrament of baptism, is a seal of God's covenant, whereby he binds himself to perform his promises made unto us in Christ, for strengthening our faith therein. That the outward signs in the Lord's supper are bread and wine, by which are set forth the body and blood of Christ, which the worthy receivers by faith do partake of in this sacrament. That whosoever eats and drinks unworthily, is guilty of the body and blood of Christ. And, therefore, that every one is to examine himself, lest he eat and drink judgment to himself.

Having thus shewed what is that knowledge, which is required of every worthy communicant;

II. I shall now shew the necessity thereof; which appeareth:

1. 'Because without this knowledge, a man can never attain to any of the other graces:' for, an ignorant man can neither believe, nor repent, nor love God or his neighbour aright.

2. 'Because without this knowledge, a man cannot discern the Lord's body:' which, if he do not, he eats and drinks damnation

to himself, 1 Cor. xi. 29. And, therefore, it is absolutely necessary, that all who receive the Lord's supper, *should discern the Lord's body;* that is, should perceive, that there is more to be received, than that which is seen with the eye of the body. To the bodily eye, there appeareth nothing but bread and wine, upon the table; but by the virtue of the divine institution, there is also Christ's *body and blood;* if this be not discerned, the benefit of the sacrament is lost. But, it is not possible without knowledge (which is the eye of the soul) to discern that body and blood, under the elements of bread and wine: therefore is the forementioned knowledge absolutely necessary.

III. For the third particular, *viz.* The trial of thy knowledge, whether it be a true saving knowledge; t ou mayest know it by the properties thereof, some whereof are these:

1. 'True saving knowledge is experimental,' whereby a Christian hath a spiritual sense and feeling of what he knows. He hath not only a general and a notional knowledge of God, and of his own miserable condition by nature, and of Jesus Christ; but he hath likewise an experimental knowledge of God, and of his attributes: as of his power in supporting him under his trial and temptations, of his faithfulness in making good his promises unto him: He hath likewise a sensible feeling of his own wretched condition by nature, and an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ; so that he knoweth Christ to be his Saviour and Redeemer and resteth upon his merits alone for life and for salvation. By this then, try and examine thy knowledge.

2. 'True saving knowledge is humble, and joined with meekness of spirit:' For, the more true knowledge a man hath, the more he discerns his own ignorance, yea, and vileness, by reason of his sins; and, therefore, you shall find those Christians, who were most eminent both in knowledge and grace complain most, as of their ignorance, so of their own base and naughty hearts; as you may see in Paul, and others, Rom. vii. 24. Eph. iii. 8. And no marvel, considering, that true saving knowledge discovers unto a man his own vileness and wretchedness, by reason of his sins; his own unworthiness, yea, his own emptiness and nothingness, in regard of any goodness of his own; whereas unsanctified knowledge is apt to puff up a man with pride, and self-conceit, even to the contemning and despising of others; which the apostle plainly expresseth, 1 Cor. viii. 1. where he saith, *Knowledge puffeth up.* By this, then, try and examine thy knowledge, whether it be a saving knowledge or no.

3. 'True saving knowledge is active, and operative, being ever accompanied with practice and obedience;' so that it worketh reformation in the heart and life of him that hath it. By this, then, try and examine thy knowledge, whether it be a saving, sanctifying one or no.

II. The second grace necessarily required of every communicant, whereof thou must examine thyself, is FAITH; concerning which, I shall shew you,

1. 'What Faith this is.'

2. 'The necessity thereof.'

3. 'Some signs and notes for the trial thereof.'

1. For the first; What faith this is?

I answer, a true, saving, justifying Faith; which may be thus described: 'Faith is a grace wrought in the heart of a sinner, by the Spirit of God, through the ministry of the word; where by, being convinced of his sinful, miserable condition, and of all disability in himself, or any other mere creature, to free him out of the same; he goeth wholly out of himself to Jesus Christ, and receiving him as his all-sufficient Saviour and Sovereign; resteth upon his perfect righteousness, and all-sufficient sacrifice for the pardon of his sins: and resigneth up himself unto his will and government.

II. The necessity of this grace of Faith to every communicant, appeareth:

1. Because without Faith, it is impossible to please God in an holy ordinance,' Heb. xi. 6. But, true Faith will commend both our persons and services unto God, so that they shall find acceptance with him, though they be full of weakness and imperfections. This made Abel's sacrifice so acceptable to God: if, therefore, thou come to this ordinance without Faith, instead of pacifying God thou shalt purchase his heavy displeasure.

2. 'Except thou hast Faith, before thou approachest to the Lord's supper, the sacrament cometh but like a seal to a blank, and serveth only to seal up thine unbelief and condemnation.' So that, Faith is necessarily required of every worthy communicant, before he cometh to the Lord's supper, for, that ordinance is not instituted *for the working of faith*, but for the *strengthening of it*. It was not instituted for such as are out of Christ to bring them in; but for such as are in Christ, to bring them up in him. As a man must be born before he can eat; so, he must be begotten again by the Spirit of God, before he can feed upon the body and blood of Christ for his spiritual nourishment. I do not say, that all who come to the sacrament, must have the same measure of Faith; but, it is necessary, that they all have the same truth of Faith.

III. For the third particular, the trial of thy Faith, whether it be true and saving: thou mayest know it by these two characters, to omit many others:

1. 'True faith doth receive Christ in all his offices:' not only as a Priest, to make satisfaction and intercession for us; but, also, as a Prophet, to teach and instruct us: and, as a King, to rule and govern us. The true believer doth as willingly cast himself at the feet of Christ, in subjection to him, as into the arms of Christ,

for salvation from him. He is as willing to serve Jesus Christ, as to be saved by him; as desirous to submit to his service, as to enjoy his privileges: For, in true faith, there is not only a fiducial reliance upon Christ and his righteousness; but also an universal subjection to the will of Christ, and a ready submission to his government. Christ is held forth in the gospel, not only as a Redeemer, but, as a Lord and a Lawgiver; and these are inseparably connected and knit together: and, therefore, he that is willing to receive Christ as a Saviour, but not as a Sovereign, doth deceive his own soul. By this, therefore, mayest thou try the truth of thy faith.

2. 'True faith is an heart-purifying grace, it purifieth the heart.' This character of faith, the apostle Peter expresseth, Acts xv. 9. *Purifying their hearts by faith.*

Faith purifying the heart, implieth two things.

1. 'That the believer maketh conscience of his inward thoughts:' Whereas, unbelievers, with the Pharisees, make clean the outside of the cup, labour to keep themselves from gross and scandalous sins, but suffer their hearts to range and rove into a world of vain and wanton thoughts, of profane and fruitless imaginations, and that without any remorse or check of conscience.

2. 'That faith puts a purifying disposition into the heart;' so that it loaths and detests sin, yea, and strives against it, though it cannot altogether purge and free itself from sin. When the heart is once seasoned with faith, it will not willingly harbour sin, but labour to work it out more and more. By this, then, try the truth and soundness of thy faith, whether it hath wrought in thee a purging purifying disposition, to strive against thy corruptions, to work them out of thine heart more and more.

III. 'The third grace necessarily required of every communicant, is REPENTANCE.' Concerning which I shall shew;

1. 'The nature of repentance, what it is.'

2. 'The necessity thereof, to a worthy partaking of the Lord's supper.'

3. 'Some signs for the trial thereof.'

I. 'For the first, what true repentance is.' I answer, 'It is a grace of God's Spirit, whereby, both the heart and affections within, and also, the life and actions without are reformed.' In this description, I take the full nature of Repentance to be comprised: many do add hereunto, *An inward sorrowing and mourning of the heart;* which, indeed, doth always accompany true Repentance, but it is not of the nature thereof. For, then, wheresoever sorrow for sin were, there should be true Repentance, which is not so; as the example of Saul, Judas, and other wicked men do declare.

Briefly to open this definition of Repentance.

First, I say, 'It is a grace of God's Spirit;' that is, a gift freely

given of God, and wrought in us by his holy Spirit. So that it proceedeth not from man's free will, nor from any power and ability of his nature.

Again, Repentance is a reformation, wherein consists the very nature thereof, as the words of *turning*, *renewing*, *changing*, and the like; which in scripture are attributed to Repentance; do imply. Now, this reformation must first be of the heart; for the heart of man is the fountain of all his actions.

Now, in reason, the fountain must be cleansed and purged, before that which issueth and streameth from it can be wholesome. There must be, therefore, first a renewed heart, before there can be a reformed life: for, it cannot be, that the stream of our actions should be good, if the fountain of our heart be corrupt. Hence it is that the prophets so often call for the cleansing of the heart; and the apostles for *the renewing* and *changing* thereof, without which, all external and outward reformation, is but mere pharisaical ostentation.

In the last place is added, 'A reformation of the life and actions without:' for, as to make some outward shew of reformation, without reforming the heart within, is but pharisaical ostentation, whereby we deceive others; so, to pretend an inward reformation, without the outward fruits of amendment, is but mere folly; whereby we deceive ourselves. For it cannot be, that reformation should be truly rooted and grounded in the heart, but that it will bud forth, and shew itself in the fruits of a godly life. That man therefore deceiveth himself, who thinks his heart is purged and reformed, when his life is polluted. For, as the fruits declare the tree; so, the actions of men manifest their affections.

II. 'The necessity of this grace of Repentance in every worthy communicant, upon his approaching to the Lord's table,' appeareth; because we come to receive a sacrifice for sin, but to offer to receive a sacrifice *for* sin, without a turning *from* sin, is to count the blood of the covenant an unholy thing. We are not ignorant, that one main end of our approaching the Lord's table is, to receive Christ as he hath offered himself a sacrifice and price of redemption for our sins: Now, he that looketh for pardon of sin, must have a full purpose; and, according to his purpose, a faithful and resolute endeavour, to forsake sin, which is, and will be, the mind of every true penitent, and also it ought to be. The Lord, therefore, requireth of them who bring their sacrifice to him for pardon, 'That they take away the evil of their works; and cease to do evil, and learn to do well, Isa. i. 15,' *&c.* And, thereupon, inserteth this gracious invitation, verse 18. 'Come now, let us reason together.' With what face then dares an impenitent sinner, that is not touched with any remorse for his sins past, nor hath any purpose to turn from his sins for the time to come, offer to take that body which was broken, and that blood which was shed

for sin? Such an eating and drinking of Christ's body and blood, is a plain trampling of the son of God under foot, and a counting of the blood of the Covenant an unholy thing, a thing that may be mixed with impure and unholy things. If this be not to be guilty of the body and blood of Christ, what else can be?

III. For the trial of thy repentance, whether it be sound and sincere, thou mayest know it by these signs and marks:

1. 'By a godly sorrow for sins past.' By a *godly sorrow*, I mean, such a sorrow as maketh God its object; that is, when we grieve and mourn for sin, more out of respect to God, than for fear of punishment; that we have offended so good a God, so gracious a Father, so bountiful a Lord and Master: I deny not, but it is good and commendable to grieve and mourn for sin, in respect of punishment, for fear of hell; for it is a good preparatory to a godly sorrow, but we must not be contented merely with such a fear. Hence, therefore, try and examine the truth of thy repentance; for, *wheresoever* there is true repentance, *there* must be this godly sorrow.

2. 'By a turning from those evil ways wherein we have formerly walked:' as you may see in the examples of those penitents that are recorded in scripture; as of Paul, Peter, Zaccheus, and others, who, upon their repentance, turned from those evil courses wherein they had fomrerly walked. The reality of thy repentance hence try by this rule: Hath it wrought a change and alteration in thy course of life? Are old things done away? Is there a forsaking of former sins? Hast thou left off thy swearing, thy drunkenness, thy whoredoms, thy defrauding by false weights and measures? Canst thou say of thyself, as Paul did of the Corinthians, 'I was once a swearer, a drunkard, an adulterer, an extortioner, a covetous person, and the like; but now I am washed, now I am sanctified, yea, and justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by the Spirit of my God?' Canst thou say thus of thyself in truth and sincerity of heart? then, thou hast some comfortable evidence of the truth and soundness of thy repentance. But how vainly do they deceive themselves, who because they have made confession of their sins unto God, and dropping perhaps, a few tears, do therefore flatter themselves with a conceit of true repentance, when yet they still live and continue in their formal sinful courses, wallowing like swine in the filth of sin, and mire of sinful filthiness?

3. 'A turning unto God.' For, where there is true repentance, there is not only a turning from sin, but likewise a turning unto God; whereby I mean a sincere endeavour to serve and please God in newness of life, and better obedience. Hath then the sense and feeling of thy former deviations made thee ardently desire to please God better for the time to come?—Make much

of such affections in thy soul; for it is a good sign of some change there.

IV. A fourth grace essentially requisite in every communicant before he presume to come to the Lord's table, is *LOVE.*

Which may be divided into two classes; as,

1. A love toward God and Christ.—And,

2. A love of one's neighbours.

Both which are inseparably knit together. Yet for a more distinct understanding of them, I will separate them in my discourse, and treat of them apart; shewing you,

1. The necessity of exercising both these kinds of love, in order to a worthy partaking of the Lord's supper.

2. Some signs and marks for the trial of them.

1. For love toward God; this is necessarily required of every communicant, because the greatest evidence that ever was given of God's love, is there set before us. For Jesus Christ the only Son of God, and Saviour of lost man, is the greatest evidence of God's love that ever was or can be. Should God set himself to make another world, and to confer on that world a greater gift than he hath conferred on this world; namely, *his only begotten and dearly beloved Son*, we may boldly say, *He could not.* Neither can the *creature* receive, nor the *Creator* give a greater gift; and that both in *respect* of the *excellency* of the gift itself, and also in regard of the *need* we had of it, and of the good we enjoy by having it. Hence God's love, in this remarkable instance, is so described, as surpasses all expressions, John iii. 16. 'God *so* loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son,' &c. *So unutterably, So inconceivably, So infinitely*, as who shall endeavour to express this *So* to the full, shall do it *so, so.* Since then such an evidence of such love of God to man is exhibited at the Lord's table, should not every one who approacheth this table, with a design to partake of that evidence, come with an heart filled with a love to God, and with a resolution to shew forth all fruits of a true love of God on all occasions?

And as we must come with a love to God, so with a love to Jesus Christ, who *so* loved us, as to *die* a *cruel*, a *cursed* death for *us;* and consequently manifested greater love to us, than to himself; to the members of his *mystical* body; than to the members of his *natural* body; for, he offered up his *natural* body as a sacrifice for the redemption of his *mystical* body. What greater love than this can be imagined? Oh how doth it then concern us to go to that ordinance with hearts inflamed with a love to Jesus Christ!—Thus much of the necessity of our love to God, and to his Son Jesus Christ.

II. For the *trial* of this love, you may know it by these signs and characters:

Where there is a true hearty love to God, and to Jesus Christ,

the heart will be much taken up with the thoughts of them. Such an one will be often thinking of God, and of Jesus Christ, and of their transcendent love manifested in the great work of redemption. David having said, Psal. cxix. 97. *Oh how do I love thy law?* he presently adds, *it is my meditation all the day.* And whatsoever and whomsoever we love, we cannot but frequently think and meditate on.

Indeed, such as love God and the Lord Jesus Christ, in truth and sincerity, may have multitudes of vain, wanton, worldly, covetous thoughts in their hearts; but they take no true delight in them, they are rather their grief and their burden; but the thoughts of God, and Christ, are very sweet and comfortable unto them. By this, therefore, try and examine the truth of thy love unto God and to Jesus Christ.

2. 'Where there is a hearty love to God, and to Jesus Christ, such an one will be often speaking of them.' For, the tongue cannot but be speaking of those things and persons on which the heart is fixt. If the heart of a man be set on the world and the things of it, his tongue will be most frequently talking and discoursing of them: In like manner, if the heart of a man be fixt on God and Jesus Christ, his tongue will be frequently talking and discoursing of them. Hence, then, try and examine the truth of thy love unto God, and to Jesus Christ: For, he that sayeth he loveth God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, and yet seldom thinks of them or speaks of them, certainly he deceiveth himself; for we cannot but be thinking and speaking of those whom we truly love.

3. Where there is an hearty love to God, and to Jesus Christ, it will make a man willing to suffer any thing for them. It is said of the primitive saints, 'that out of their abundant love to the Lord Jesus Christ, they accounted not their estates too dear for him, but took joyfully the spoiling of their goods,' Heb. x. 34. Neither did they account their lives too dear; for it is expressly said, Rev. xii. 11. *They loved not their lives unto the death for him; that is,* they despised their lives in comparison of Christ; they willingly exposed not only their goods and estates, to the spoil, and their persons to all manner of shame and contempt, but also their bodies to painful deaths for the cause of Christ: then try and examine the truth of thy love unto Jesus Christ, by this, namely, by thy willingness to suffer for the cause and truths of Jesus Christ.

II. *Love* of thy neighbour, is another branch of that love which is required of every communicant. Concerning which love I shall briefly shew,

1. The *necessity* of its being in every communicant.

2. The trial of it.

1. That every communicant must have, along with love to God, Love to his neighbour, is evident from this, That the Lord will not accept of any service thou performest unto him, '*if* thou be

not in love and charity with thy neighbour.' Mat. v. 23, 24. saith our Saviour, 'If thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.' Hereby is implied, that if there be any *variance* between thee and thy *neighbour*, peace and reconciliation must be speedily sought: For, without *it*, God will not accept of any worship or service thou offerest unto him. Though Christ here instanceth but in one kind of worship, which was the offering up of sacrifice, yet under this he comprehendeth all the parts and kinds of God's worship, as *praying*, *hearing*, *receiving the sacrament*, or the like. So that Christ's meaning is, 'that whensoever thou settest upon any part of God's worship and service, and then rememberest, *that thy brother hath aught against thee;*' that is, thou hast any way wronged and offended thy brother; or, as St. *Mark* hath it, chap. xi. 25. '*If thou hast aught against thy brother*, that is, if he hath wronged thee; *first be reconciled to thy brother, and then go to the ordinance of God.*'

II. For the *trial* of the truth of thy love to thy brother, thou mayest know it by these marks:

1. If thou hast truly forgiven thy brother, thou wilt be so far from doing him any harm, (though it lay in thy power) that thou wilt not wish any harm unto him.

2. If thou hast truly forgiven thy offending brother, thou wilt willingly embrace all occasions of doing him good, that so he may know, and be assured, that thou art reconciled unto him. This, our Saviour requireth of all his disciples, Mat. v. 44. where saith he, *Love your enemies;* that is, those who have any way wronged you: And as an evidence of the truth of your love, he addeth, *Do good unto them that hate you;* intimating, that it is not sufficient that you speak friendly and peaceably to your enemies, but you must likewise take all occasions of doing them what good you can; which is true *Christian love* and *charity*.

Having thus spoken largely to the first head of examination, namely, *Our graces*, I come now to the second, namely, *Our sins*, wherein I shall study brevity.

As it is the duty of every communicant to examine himself concerning his *graces*, so likewise concerning his *sins;* which are like that accursed thing which God speaks of to Joshua, Josh. vii. 11. they must therefore be searched out. Yea, they are like the *wild gourd that brought death into the pot*. If they be not searched out, and cast away, they will turn the sacramental bread and wine into spiritual bane. 'He therefore that covereth his sins shall not prosper; but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy,' Psalms xxviii. 13.

It is said of the viper, that, when she goeth to join with her mate, she casteth out all her poison: How much more oughtest

thou, when thou goest to have communion with thy heavenly Spouse the Lord Jesus Christ, cast out thy sins, which are a spiritual poison, worse than the poison of any viper?

In this examination, thou must search after thine evil thoughts, words, and deeds; as after thy sins of omission and commission, so after thy sinful manner of performing holy exercises; and, especially, after the sins thou hast committed since thy last receiving the blessed sacrament; and such as are most against the vows and covenants that formerly thou madest with God, and which do most gall thy conscience, or most disgrace thy profession, or are greatest occasions of dulling thy spirit: that these being found out, they may be the more lamented, and pardon for them more earnestly desired.

In examining thyself, it will be a good help, to read such a treatise as doth in particular set out the several sins against the several commandments. For, when, by such a treatise thou art shewed, that such a thing is a sin against such a commandment, thy conscience will, upon the reading of such sins, tell thee, that therein thou hast sinned. Having examined and searched thine heart thoroughly of all thy known sins, then humble thyself before the throne of grace, in a true and unfeigned acknowledgment and confession of them, freely judging and condemning thyself before God, with a broken and a contrite heart.

That thy confession may be performed after a right manner, it must have these properties:

1. 'It must be *particular*, and of *special* sins.' In thy confession thou must descend to special and particular sins. The profanest wretch in the world may, in a general manner, confess, and say, *I acknowledge myself to be a sinner:* But, if thou wilt make a true confession of sin, thou must lay open thy sins in *particular* before God. And, for thine encouragement to this, know, that the *more particular* thou shalt be in thy confession, the *more comfort* thou wilt find in it.

2. 'Thy confession, must be, as, *particular* in respect of *sins*, so likewise *full*, in regard of the *aggravations* of them. Thus did David in his confession of that sin of numbering the people, 2 Sam. xxiv. 10. 'I have sinned greatly in that I have done, and now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant, for I have done very foolishly.' See what terms of aggravations he heapeth up, 1. *I have sinned.* 2. *I have sinned greatly.* 3. *I have done foolishly.* 4. *Very foolishly.* And, as thou desirest pardon of thy sins, set them forth to the full: let no circumstance of aggravation be wanting, by which they may appear the more foul and filthy.

3. 'Thy confession must be with *inward remorse and sorrow of heart*, that thou hast sinned against so good and so gracious a God.' Thou must not content thyself with a mere verbal ac-

knowledgment of thy sins and transgressions, being affected with no more grief in the confessing of them, than thou wast in the committing of them: But, every sin confessed should be as a dagger piercing thee to the very heart; at least thou shouldest grieve that thou canst no more grieve for thy sins; thine heart should bleed, because thine eyes cannot weep.

And, having confessed thy sins, pour out thy soul in hearty prayer unto God for the pardon and forgiveness of them then all; and then be earnest with him to make the sacrament effectual to thy comfort, effectual to the mortifying of thy lusts, to the strengthening of thy graces, especially to the confirming of thy faith in the assurance of the pardon and forgiveness of thy sins, &c.

II. Having shewed the duties *antecedent*, come we now to the duties *concomitant;* that is, such as must accompany the action of receiving.

But first I shall premise some few *directions* concerning the *manner* of thine approaching to the Lord's table.

1. Having thus prepared thyself, go not in the strength of thy preparations, but in the strength of Jesus Christ, looking for acceptance only in and through his merits and mediation: For, though thou hast prepared thyself after the best manner that thou canst, yet, if, with an impartial eye thou shalt look back upon thy preparations; how full of weaknesses, infirmities, and imperfections wilt thou find them? So that, if Christ doth not cover both thy person and preparation with the robe of his righteousness, and sprinkle them with his blood, neither thy person, nor thy preparation, will find acceptance with God. Cast, therefore, all thy preparations at the feet of Jesus Christ, and say, 'Lord, I come not in the strength of my preparations, but only in the strength of Jesus Christ: I come in the alone name and mediation of Christ, to partake of the body and blood of Christ, and of the benefits of his death and passion.' And thou mayest then be confident, that God will over-look thy manifold weaknesses and imperfections in the work of preparation, and accept of thee, and of thy services, in and through his beloved Son Jesus Christ.

2. 'As thou art going meditate on the *end* and *benefits* of that solemn ordinance:' Some of which are these:

1. The remembrance of the death of Christ, it being instituted as a *memorial* of it.

2. The spiritual nourishment of our souls.

3. The strengthening of our faith in the assurance of the pardon and forgiveness of our sins.

4. The sealing of the covenant of grace, with all the blessings of it, unto the believing soul.

5. The increasing of our spiritual *union* and communion with Christ and all his members. A serious meditation of these, will be a special means to stir up in us some spiritual appetite after

the ordinance, that we shall go with hungering and thirsting desires after it.

3. 'Go to the sacrament with a strong expectation to receive much from God in and through that ordinance;' knowing, that God will enlarge himself unto all those who come with enlarged hearts, and with a strong expectation of many good things. *Open thy mouth wide*, saith the Lord, Psal. lxxxi. 10. *and I will fill it.* So that, if thou open thy mouth wide, in a longing expectation of great matters, he will fill it: Yea, the more thine heart is enlarged in desire and expectation, the more will God's heart be enlarged in bounty towards thee. As, therefore, God hath promised in the covenant of grace, 'To be thy God, to write his law in thy heart, to pardon thy sins, to subdue thy corruptions, to give thee a soft heart, yea, to give thee grace here, and glory hereafter, and the like, go with an expectation of these on any such like blessings, and thou shalt not be disappointed of thine hopes.

4. 'Approach to the Lord's table with all holy reverence,' in respect of God's glorious Majesty, who is in a special manner present at that ordinance, to behold his guests, and *will be sanctified by all those who draw nigh unto him*, Lev. x. 3.

5. 'Approach to it with all *humility*,' in respect of thine own vileness and unworthiness, who art but sinful dust and ashes; and (if thou hast any light of grace in thee) canst not be conscious to thyself of more corruptions in thine own heart, than thou knowest to be in the heart of another: And, therefore, say not, such an one is ignorant, and such an one is loose in his life and conversation; but say, 'Lord, I am ignorant, I am unworthy to draw nigh unto thee in so holy an ordinance, not worthy to gather up the crumbs under thy table;' And know, that the more unworthy thou art in thine own account, the worthiest guest thou art in the account of God.

6. 'As thou art going to the Lord's table, cast all thy worldly thoughts and businesses out of thy head,' which, otherwise, will carry away thine heart from the ordinance, and exceedingly disturb thee at it. In Job i. 6. we read, 'There was a day when the sons of God came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came among them:' In like manner, on the day when *God's children* present themselves before the Lord in that solemn ordinance, Satan will be sure to appear amongst them, to disturb and distract them therein, (as much as possibly he can) by casting into their head vain and impertinent thoughts. And, therefore, it concerneth thee to be watchful over thy thoughts, and to keep thy heart close to the ordinance! To that end, it will be thy wisdom often to eye the outward elements of bread and wine, and diligently to observe the outward rites and actions in the ordinance; and there upon to meditate on the spiritual things signified by it.

These things premised; come we now to the duties to be performed at the ordinance, which are these:

1. 'When thou art present at the ordinance, put forth all the strength thou canst in the partaking thereof,' I mean the strength of thy affection. For, though thou art very weak, yet, if thou put forth thy weakness, God will accept of it. Content not thyself, therefore, with a mere participation of the Lord's supper; but let thy care be, to bring up thine heart and affections to the ordinance, and to put forth what strength thou canst.

2. 'Remember the death of Christ;' which is Christ's command in the institution of this ordinance: For, saith he, *This do in remembrance of me*, viz. in remembrance of my bitter death and passion. For, the apostle Paul explaining this *remembrance of Christ*, applieth it, to his death, and the shewing it forth: 'This do,' saith he. 'in remembrance of me: for as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew forth the Lord's death till he come,' 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27. So that, this ordinance of the Lord's supper was instituted for a *solemn memorial* of that great sacrifice, the Lord Jesus Christ, that his death might never be forgotten, but be ever fresh in our memories.

And why must his death be thus remembered? Surely because thereby was the covenant of grace ratified and sealed, our redemption purchased, our sins expiated, our reconciliation made with God, and the foundation of our graces laid. And, therefore, at the table, let out thine heart in a serious meditation of the manifold sufferings of Christ, which is the *to ergon*, the *main business* of this ordinance. And meditate not only of his sufferings at his death, but likewise in the whole course of his life, even from his *cratch* to his *cross*, from his *birth* to his *death*. For, his whole life was a continual suffering. Meditate, therefore, of his mean birth, and flight in his infancy, of the manifold reproaches which were upon him from time to time; yea, of his manifold persecutions; of their cruel handling of him at the time of his death, when they apprehended him like a thief, bound him, arraigned and condemned him as a malefactor, buffeted him with their hands, beat him with staves, scourged him with whips, *making long furrows on his back;* platted on his head a crown of sharp thorns, laid an heavy cross on his back, nailed his hands and feet to that cross, gave him gall and vinegar to drink, and sundry ways much afflicted him. Thus was his body broken with torments. In relation to this, it is said of him, 'That he was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs.'

Especially when thou art present at the ordinance, take a turn with Christ in the *garden*, by meditating of his bitter *agony*, when *he sweat drops of blood;* which was never read, or heard of, in any before, or since. Yea, the blood that Christ then sweat was not thin watery blood, but *thick blood;* as *thromboi*, in the original pro-

perly signifieth. Luke xxii. 44. saith the Evangelist, 'Being in an agony, his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down to the ground.' Which latter clause sheweth, that the blood of Christ passed through the pores of his body in such a plentiful manner, that it trickled down to the ground in great abundance: so that as *Bernard* speaketh (*Non solum oculis, sed membris omnibus flevisse videtur :*) 'Not only the eyes of Christ, but all the parts of his body did seem to weep, and that tears of blood.'

In this sweat of Christ, there are three things remarkable, which do exceedingly set forth the greatness of his agony.

1. 'It was a cold night,' for which cause afterwards they kindled a fire in the high-priest's-hall.

2. 'He lay upon the cold ground ;' both which were enough to drive the blood inward, Mat. xxvi. 39.

3. 'He was in exceeding great fear,' which naturally draweth the blood from the outward parts to the heart ; and yet, 'in a *cold night*, lying upon *the cold ground*, and being in *great fear*, he sweat great drops of blood,' Mat. xxvi. 39. Who can imagine the bitterness of our Saviour's agony at that time ? And what was it which put him into that agony ? Questionless, the apprehension of what he was to suffer, as appeareth by his prayer in his agony ; 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me.' Now, if the apprehension of what he was to suffer was so bitter, Oh how bitter think you were his actual sufferings upon the cross, when he cried out, 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me ?' which words do not imply, that the Deity was separated from the humanity ; but, that the Father had withdrawn from him all sensible feeling of his loving favour, had restrained the influence of those beams, which might any way refresh his troubled soul : so that, Christ might well take up the words of the captive Jews, and say, 'Behold and see, if there be any sorrow like to my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger ?' Lam. i. 12.

These things call to mind, in the time of the administration of the sacrament, not only when thou art eating the bread, and drinking the wine, but also when thou seest the bread broken, and the wine poured forth, then thou shouldst think how Christ's body was broken with torments, and his blood shed for the remission of sins : And also, when thou seest others taking the bread and the wine, thou shouldst then be steeping thy thoughts in the meditation of Christ's bitter death, and manifold sufferings.

This remembrance of Christ's death at the sacrament, must not be a bare *historical* remembrance thereof, contenting thyself with a remembrance of the history of Christ's death as it is set forth by the Evangelists ; but it must be an *operative* and *practical* remembrance, working up thine heart :

1. 'To an unfeigned love of God,' who, out of his free grace,

and rich mercy, did send his dearly beloved Son out of his own bosom into the world, to take our nature upon him, and in it to die a bitter, cursed death for man's redemption. Who can sufficiently admire the riches of God's love to man therein! How may we with David cry out, and say, *Lord, what is man that thou art so mindful of him!* especially that thou shouldst be so mindful of him, as to give the Son of thy love to suffer a cursed death upon the cross, to make us who were 'children of wrath, and bond slaves of Satan, *sons of God*, and heirs of eternal life and salvation!' And how should this incomprehensible love of God, fire and inflame our cold and frozen hearts with a fervent love unto him again?

2. 'The remembrance of Christ's death should work up our hearts to an ardent love of Christ, for that wonderful love of his in giving himself for us,' his body to be crucified, his blood to be shed, and his soul to bear the intolerable burthen of his Father's wrath, due to our sins; which made him sweat great drops of blood in the garden, and to cry out on the cross, *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?* Oh how should this ravish our souls with admiration of so great love! and inflame our hearts with love again unto him, who did, and suffered so much for us! How should the meditation of the manifold sufferings of Christ, especially of his bitter death and passion, work in us an holy passion of love!

3. 'The remembrance of Christ's death should work in us a care to please him in all things, to be willing to do and suffer any thing for him, who hath done and suffered so much for us;' which Christ declareth to be a good proof of our love to him, saying, *If ye love me, keep my commandments*, John xiv. 15. And though we cannot exactly keep the commandments of Christ, yet, we may and ought sincerely to endeavour the keeping of them, without which our profession of love is but vain and fruitless, in shew, and not in truth.

4. 'The remembrance of Christ's death should work in us a godly sorrow for our sins, as the true cause of his sufferings.' For, the truth is: it was not so much Judas that betrayed Christ, nor the scribes and Pharisees that accused him, nor Pilate that condemned him, nor the soldiers that crucified him, nor the devil that set them all on work, as *our sins;* that were the true cause of Christ's sufferings. The soldiers that scourged and crucified him, were but our executioners, to inflict on him those punishments, which our sins deserved, and God's justice imposed for the same. 'Twas our sins which invenomed those whips, that scourged his innocent body? They were those thorns which pricked his temples; they were those nails which pierced his hands and feet, and made them so bitter unto him: 'Oh therefore, that we could so look upon him, whom we have pierced by our sins; that we might

mourn, as one that mourneth for his only son, and be in bitterness, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born,' Zech. xii. 10.

5. 'The remembrance of Christ's death should work in us the death of sin:' We should so remember the death of Christ, as to die unto sin. For, the apostle Paul urges our death to sin, from the death of Christ, 'that as Christ died and rose again, so we should die to sin, and live unto God,' Rom. vi. 2. To this end, let us hate and loath sin as the greatest evil, resolving, with the assistance of God's grace, to leave and forsake all manner of sins for the time to come. For why should any sin seem light to us, which lay so heavy upon our Saviour, as to cast him into a bloody sweat? Why should any sin be so sweet to us, which was so bitter to our Saviour? Far be it from us, by our renewed sins, to tear open his wounds afresh, and crucify him again.

6. 'The remembrance of Christ's death should work in our hearts some due thankfulness unto God, and his Son Jesus Christ for their unspeakable love and mercy manifested towards us by Christ's death. Thankfulness is a grace, not only to be exercised after our receiving of the sacrament, but, likewise, when we are present at the ordinance. When our hearts are affected with the apprehension of the incomprehensible love of God the Father, in giving his beloved Son out of his bosom to die for us; and of the unspeakable love of Christ, in offering his own body a sacrifice upon the cross for our sins, then should our hearts break forth in praises and thanksgiving unto God the Father, and his Son Jesus Christ.

III. 'Another duty to be performed at the ordinance, is, the exercise of thy graces, more especially of thy Faith, and Repentance.' It is not enough that thou bring Faith, Repentance, and other graces to the sacrament, but thou must likewise there stir up thy graces, and exercise them, or else thou wilt be an unworthy receiver.

And, therefore, as thou wouldst be a worthy guest, and partake of the comfort of the ordinance, stir up and exercise thy graces. As,

1. 'Thy Faith.' This is the chief *grace* to be exercised at the sacrament; for *Faith* is the eye of the soul, whereby it seeth and discerneth the body and blood of Christ under the elements of bread and wine. It is likewise the *hand* of the soul, whereby it receiveth Jesus Christ: And the *mouth* of the soul, whereby it feedeth upon Jesus Christ. And, therefore, without the exercising of thy Faith at the sacrament, thou canst receive no benefit at all.

There is a threefold act of Faith to be exercised at the Lord's supper:

1. 'To look out for Christ.'
2. 'To receive Christ.'
3. 'To apply and appropriate him to thine ownself.'

1. The first act of Faith is, 'To look out for Christ:' And, therefore, when thou art present at the Lord's supper, rest not in the outward elements, in the beholding and taking of them, but, with the eye of Faith, discern the body and blood of Christ, under the elements of bread and wine, which indeed do spiritually, and sacramentally set forth, the body and blood of Christ, as is clear from Christ's own expression, Mat. xxvi. 26.

And, as thou art not to rest in the outward elements, so, neither in the outward rites and actions, but, in the beholding of them, thou art with the eye of Faith, to see and discern the spiritual things signified thereby: when, therefore, thou beholdest the minister breaking the bread; then meditate of the manifold sufferings of Christ; and with the eye of Faith, look upon Jesus Christ hanging upon the cross, there conflicting with his Father's wrath, and groaning under the weight and burden of our sins; behold his blessed body broken and torn with stripes and wounds, with whips and nails.

And, when thou seest the minister pouring out of the wine, then exercise and actuate thy Faith in the blood of Jesus Christ, and the shedding thereof, which, indeed, sheweth the extent of Christ's sufferings, even to the taking away of his life: which is the farthest extent of a man's suffering in this world.

Again, when thou seest the minister offering the bread and wine to the communicants, then, by the eye of Faith, see God's love in offering his Son to every believing communicant. For as verily, as the minister doth offer the bread and wine, so, truly doth God really offer Christ, with all the benefits of his death and passion to every believing communicant. I do not say carnally, but really; not the flesh of Christ, but Christ with all the benefits of his death and passion; as reconciliation, redemption, remission of sins, &c. For there is not a mere representation, but a real and true exhibition of Christ, as broken for our sins.

II. Another act of Faith to be exercised at the Lord's supper, is, 'To receive Jesus Christ.' For, the believer having seen Christ with the eye of Faith, under the outward elements, and forementioned rites, then he receiveth him into his heart with much joy and gladness. As, therefore, thou stretchest forth the hand of thy body to receive the bread and wine; stretch forth the hand of Faith to apprehend and receive Jesus Christ, and rest upon him; as for the pardon of thy sins here; so, for eternal life and salvation hereafter.

III. Another act of Faith to be exercised at the Lord's supper, is, 'To apply and appropriate Christ to thyself;' which is implied under the rites of eating the bread, and drinking the wine; whereby is meant, 'a feeding upon Christ by Faith,' which is an applying of him. When, therefore, thou art eating the bread, and drinking the wine, feed upon Christ, 'by a particular application

of him and all his benefits, to thine own soul's comfort;' by Faith assure thyself, that Christ was born for thee, that he might be thy Saviour, to save thee from thy sins; that he performed perfect obedience unto the law; that his righteousness might be imputed unto thee; that he died a bitter cursed death, to free thee from eternal death and condemnation, which thy sins have deserved. Thus, thou oughtest to apply Christ, with all his benefits, unto thine own soul's comfort. And thus to act faith, is to eat and drink indeed. The truth is, the act of faith in applying Christ, is the most suitable to the ordinance of the Lord's supper: and, the more thou canst put forth the act of application therein, the greater comfort shalt thou derive from the ordinance: for, propriety in Christ, is that which sweetens all.

Yet, lest weak Christians, such as are weak in faith, should be discouraged, and think themselves uncapable of comfort, because they cannot apply Christ, nor the benefits of his death unto themselves:

I desire such take notice, that though this act of application is the most suitable to the ordinance, yet, the former act of receiving Christ, and resting upon him, giveth us a true interest in him, whereby Christ and all his benefits become ours, which puts us into a blessed and happy condition. Yet, I would advise all such, who have attained to that degree and measure of faith, as to lay hold upon Jesus Christ, and to receive him as their Saviour, and to rest upon him alone for life and salvation, that they would strive to raise it one pitch higher; namely, to apply Christ, with all the benefits of his death and passion, unto their own soul's comfort; because this act of faith doth especially contribute to our comfort and consolation, as well as to our spiritual benefit.

II. Another grace to be exercised at the Lord's supper, is, 'Repentance.' For, a broken Christ requireth a broken heart; whereas, in true Repentance, there is a *godly sorrow for sins past*, and *a full purpose and resolution of heart*, to leave and forsake them for the time to come, and to walk more closely with God; while you are at the sacrament, you should exercise your Repentance, in both these particulars:

1. 'You should labour to be affected with a true grief and sorrow for your sins.' To that end, seriously meditate on the manifold sufferings of Christ; for, certainly a due and serious meditation of what Christ hath suffered for our sins, cannot but affect our hearts with some measure of grief and sorrow for them. For, shall Christ bleed for our sins, and shall not we weep for them? Was Christ broken with torments for our sins, and shall not the consideration of this, break our hearts for them?

2. 'You must engage yourselves by a solemn vow and promise unto God, to be more watchful over yourselves against sin for the time to come, and to walk more closely and exactly with God.'

As often as you partake of the Lord's supper, so often God renewеth the covenant on his part; he engageth himself afresh 'to be your God, to pardon your sins, to subdue your corruptions, to write his law in your hearts;' that is, to work in you, as a desire and disposition to the keeping of his laws and commandments, so, a sincere endeavour to observe them. And, therefore, it is your duty to renew the covenant on your parts, to engage yourselves afresh, in the strength of Christ, to walk as a people in covenant with God, to be more watchful over yourselves against sin for the time to come; to be more his faithful servants, than ever you were before.

Having shewed both the duties *antecedent* and *concomitant*, come we now to the duties *subsequent*, such as must follow after the action of receiving. For it is not enough that you duly prepare yourselves to that ordinance, and reverently carry yourselves at it; but you must likewise, in some measure, walk suitably to it. To that end, observe these directions:

1. 'So soon as you get home, withdraw yourself into some secret place, and there, upon your knees, heartily bless God, as for his manifold favours, mercies and blessings, so especially, and above all, for the fountain of all blessings, the Lord Jesus Christ; for his covenant of grace made unto you in him; for adding the sacraments as seals to the covenant of grace, for the strengthening of your faith; for making you that day a partaker of his blessed sacrament, and for that comfort and refreshment which you have found in it.

2. 'Did you find your hearts cheered and warmed at the Lord's supper?' beware of quenching that spiritual heat which was there kindled in you, by a sudden falling into worldly conferences, and fruitless discourses. But labour to keep alive the sacred fire which you found then kindled in your hearts, by prayer, meditation, and holy conferences: For, know, that a sudden quenching of the Spirit, will exceedingly tend to the hardening of your hearts.

3. 'Maintain a stricter watchfulness over yourselves against sin, for the time to come.' Were your souls washed at the sacrament, with the blood of Christ, from the filthy spots and stains of sins, and will you soon after, with the sow, wallow again in the filth of sin, and mire of sinful filthiness? Did you, upon your approaching to that ordinance, cast up your sins by confession; and will you now with the *dog*, *return to your vomit again?* Did you there by the eye of Faith, see Christ crucified for your sins, under the rites of breaking the bread, and pouring out the wine; and will you now, by a fresh committing of sin, crucify him again? rather resolve and strive henceforward to crucify your sins, for which Christ was crucified, to hate and abhor, and abandon every sin, as much as in you lieth.

4. 'Labour to live more soberly, righteously, and godly, in

this present world,' Tit. ii. 12. More soberly, towards yourselves; more righteously towards your neighbours, and more godly towards God. As you have been made partakers of an ordinance not common to all, but peculiar to saints; so your lives should have somewhat peculiar in them, which is not common to wicked men. You should live convincing lives, by exceeding others in holiness and righteousness. You must be more frequent and fervent in family-duties, more careful in sanctifying the Lord's day, more just and honest in your dealings with men, living so as you may honour your profession, and adorn the gospel of Jesus Christ. And when you are tempted to any sin, thus reason the case with yourself: 'Was I not lately at the Lord's table? and did I not there vow and promise to be more watchful against sin, and more careful to walk in the ways of godliness? And shall I now step out of the way of godliness, into the way of sin?' Thus lay your temptation to the touchstone of your vow, and try whether it be not against it; and this, through the blessing of God, may prevent many a sin.

CHAP. XXII.

Of preparing for Death, and how to die well.

IF thou apprehendest thy disease to be mortal, and that it is like to be thy last sickness, then it will be thy wisdom to prepare thyself after the best manner thou canst for death.

For thy better help therein, take these Directions.

1. 'Set thine house in order;' I mean, settle thy outward estate, by making thy will: which will no way hasten thy death; (as many foolishly do imagine) but rather put thee into a capacity, to set thy soul in order for a blessed departure. And, as God hath blest thee with an estate, so fail not to give some proportionable part thereof, for the relief of the poor members of Jesus Christ. Though that charity which is exercised in a man's life-time, is questionless the best, and the most acceptable unto God, when we make our own hands our executors, and our own eyes our overseers; yet, I condemn not that charity which is shewed at the last; for, better late than never.

2. 'Send for some godly minister, or experienced Christian, to advise thee about setting thy soul in order, in reference to thy great change.' This direction the Apostle James giveth, chap. v. 14. *Is any man sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church, and let them pray over him.* This I would advise thee to do in the first place, not putting it off to the last, when thine understanding and memory begin to fail thee, as the practice of

the most is; who, when the physician hath done with them, and in a manner given them over, then send for the divine to begin with them; as if a short prayer, and a few words of ghostly counsel, were enough to send them to heaven.

3. 'Labour to make, or rather to renew thy peace with God.' For, though the making thy peace with God, ought not to be put off to thy death-bed; yet, must it then be renewed in an especial manner, as being the last time of doing it. In order thereunto:

1. 'Look back into thy former course of life; and call to mind the manifold deviations of it;' the unsavouriness of thy words and speeches, as also the wickedness of thine actions. And, in examining thyself concerning thine actions, call to mind, as thy sinful omissions and commissions, so, likewise, thy sinful manner of performing holy duties; how thy most religious services have had a mixture of sin in them. Likewise, run over the several ages of thy life, and consider what sins thou committedst in thy childhood, what in thy youth, and what in thy riper years.

And, together with the number of thy sins, consider the aggravating circumstances of them, till thou find thine heart in some measure affected with grief and sorrow for them: and then,

2. 'Confess thy sins unto God in prayer,' spread them before him in a true and unfeigned acknowledgment and confession of them, freely judging and condemning thyself before God for them.

3. 'Earnestly beg of him the pardon and the forgiveness of them, in and through the merits of Jesus Christ.' For thou canst look for it only through the free grace and mercy of God in Jesus Christ.

4. 'Sprinkle thy soul with the blood of Jesus Christ.' Christ is our peace, as the Apostle calls him, Eph. ii. 5. Neither canst thou (by all that thou art able to do) make thy peace with God, but only through Faith in his blood. When the destroying angel saw the blood of the lamb sprinkled on the posts of any door, he passed by that house, and they within were safe, Exod. xii. 23. So that soul, which is sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ, is so safe from the destroying angel of God, that he shall not do it hurt; for death is an advantage to that soul which is sprinkled with the blood of Christ.

It is not enough that Christ hath shed his blood, but there must be besides the shedding of it, the sprinkling of it.

Q. 1. How is Christ's blood sprinkled upon our souls?

A. By Faith, applying the blood of Christ to our own soul's comfort. Faith is the hand of the soul; and the soul by Faith, puts her hand into the wounds of Christ, takes of his blood, and besprinkles herself with it, applying the merits and the virtue of it unto itself, whence follows peace and reconciliation with God.

Obj. My sins are so many for number, and so heinous in their quality, that I cannot imagine that Christ should belong unto me;

and therefore dare not apply him, nor the benefits of his death and passion unto myself?

Ans. The more sinful thou art in thine own sense and apprehension, the fitter thou art to close with Jesus Christ, and to apply the merits of his death unto thyself. For, in that gracious invitation of Christ, Mat. xi. 28. we find no other qualification put in, but a sense of sin: *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest;* where the parties invited to come unto Christ, are such as are sensible of, and thereupon groan under the weight and burden of their sins; as the words in the Greek (*kopiontes kai pephortismenoi*) properly signify. And, Luke v. 32. Christ professeth, *He came not to call the righteous, but sinners;* not such as were *righteous* in their own conceit, but such as were sinners in their own sense and apprehension, truly sensible of their own sins. So that, sense of sin is the only qualification requisite to an application of Jesus Christ.

Obj. 'I have often sinned against knowledge and conscience; and therefore fear I have committed that unpardonable sin, the sin against the Holy Ghost; and so dare not apply Christ's blood unto myself.'

Ans. Though the sin against the Holy Ghost be a sin against knowledge and conscience, yet, every sin (yea, every grievous sin) against knowledge and conscience, is not the sin against the Holy Ghost, for they may be without malice of heart: which this cannot be: and therefore, though thou hast often sinned against knowledge and conscience; yet if thou hast not sinned with a malicious heart; that is, if thou hast not sinned merely, because thou wouldst displease God, and grieve his Spirit, thou hast not committed the sin against the Holy Ghost.

IV. 'Having made thy peace with God, then make thy peace with men, by an hearty forgiving all who have wronged thee.' This is a duty to be performed by thee in the whole course of thy life, as any occasion thereof is given, without which, the Lord will not accept of any Christian-service and sacrifice that thou offerest unto him: and therefore, saith our Saviour, Mat. xi. 25. *When thou standest praying, forgive, if thou hast aught against any.* For, indeed, how canst thou ask forgiveness of thy sins, when thou wilt not forgive man his offences against thee? How canst thou beg peace and reconciliation with thy heavenly Father, when thou wilt not be reconciled on earth to thy brother? As, therefore, this duty is to be performed by thee in the whole course of thy life, so, especially in thy last sickness, for thereby thou mayest gain some comfortable ground in thine own soul, of the forgiveness of thy sins committed against God; which our Saviour implieth in that expression of his, Mat. vi. 14. *If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you.*

5. 'Labour to clear up thine evidence for heaven,' that thou

mayest upon good ground be able to say with the apostle Paul, 'I know that when the earthly house of this tabernacle is dissolved I shall have a building with God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.' The Scripture layeth down sundry clear evidences of a true right and title unto heaven, as, *Faith in Jesus Christ;* for, saith our Saviour, John iii. 16. God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life:' And, said John the Baptist, verse 36. *He that believeth on the Son, hath everlasting life;* that is, he is as sure of it, as if he were in actual possession of it. Another evidence for heaven, is set down by the beloved disciple John, 1 John iii. 14. *We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love the brethren.*

Because many good Christians, and true believers, are much troubled upon their death-bed, for want of assurance of their interest in Christ, and of a better life after this: I shall lay down three considerations for their comfort and support:

1. 'A man may have the Faith of adherence, though he have not the Faith of evidence and assurance.' For the better understanding whereof, you must know, there is a two-fold Faith, as divines distinguish, *viz. The Faith of adherence*, whereby we roll ourselves upon Christ, and rest upon him and his merits alone for life and for salvation: and *the Faith of evidence and assurance*, whereby we know and are assured of our interest in Christ, and, consequently of our right and title unto heaven. Now, a man may have the *Faith of adherence*, which is true justifying Faith, that giveth us an interest in Christ, and a right to heaven, and yet may want the Faith of evidence and assurance; so that he knoweth not his happiness. As the child may truly hang about the mother's neck, or cast itself into her arms, and yet receive neither kiss nor smile from her: so a poor soul may truly roll itself upon Christ, cast itself into his arms, and rest in his bosom (which is true faith) and yet have neither kiss nor smile from him: therefore far be it from thee to question the truth of thy faith, merely for want of Christ's smiling upon thee; or to question thy *faith of adherence* because thou hast not the *faith of evidence and assurance.*

2. 'Assurance of our interest in Christ, and of our future happiness, though it be requisite to the consolation of a Christian, yet not to his salvation;' though to his comfort, yet not to his safety; his condition may be safe though not very comfortable at present: for a Christian's safety doth not at all depend upon his assurance, but upon his faith. That Christian, that can, by faith, roll himself upon Christ, cast himself into his arms, resting upon his merits alone for life, and for salvation, his state and condition is *safe*, though he hath not that assurance which he doth desire: for, the promise of life and salvation is made to faith, and not to assurance; the tenor of the gospel is, *Believe and thou shalt be saved;* as John

iii. 16. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.' It is not said, that whosoever hath assurance of his interest in Christ, and of eternal life and salvation, but *whosoever believeth in Christ shall be saved.* This consideration may revive many drooping souls, who though they do renounce all confidence in themselves in any righteousness of their own, and place their whole confidence upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ and the merits of his death and passion, yet have no comfortable assurance in their own souls of their interest in Christ, or of their eternal life and salvation; let such know, that their condition may be good and safe though they have not such assurance.

3. 'Assurance of salvation is not so ordinary as many Christians do imagine;' for, indeed, there are but few Christians who do here attain to a clear evidence and full assurance of their salvation; such whom the Lord here calleth forth to hard services, or great sufferings; to them he is pleased many times to give some clear evidence and assurance of their eternal life and salvation, for their better comfort and support. Thus many martyrs have expressed their full assurance of a better life after this, whereas such a measure is not usually granted to ordinary Christians, their trials being as it were but flea-bites in comparison of the others.

IV. Then especially exercise the graces of God's Spirit that are in thee: As,

1. 'Thy Faith,' Which is a grace of special use to thee so long as thou livest in the world, but most of all at thy last sickness, and at the time of thy death: therefore then especially be often exercising thy faith in Jesus Christ; with the eye of faith look on Christ hanging upon the cross; the offering up his life as an all-sufficient sacrifice and full satisfaction to God's justice for thy sins, and cast thyself into the arms of Jesus Christ, resting upon his merits alone, for thy salvation with a disclaiming of all confidence in thyself, or any righteousness of thine own, place thy whole confidence upon the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and upon the merits of his death and passion.

2. Then especially *exert thy zeal for God's glory*, by giving good counsel to those who are about thee, or come to visit thee; it is the last time thou canst do any thing for God in this world; therefore then shew thy love to him, and this zeal for his glory, by calling upon others to fear him, and to serve him, by a conscionable discharge of the duties of their places, callings, and relations; persuade them to mind the things of the world less, and the things of heaven more; to prize health, and improve it for the good of their souls; to lay up a stock of graces and comforts against the evil day, and to get their evidences for heaven made clear unto them, before they be cast upon their death-beds. Words of dying men are of most efficacy and authority; and therefore im-

prove thy dying speeches to the glory of God and the good of thy neighbour.

3. 'Exert thine obedience,' by resigning up thyself unto the will of God, to be at his disposal, either for life or death: As thou must not be unwilling to die when God calleth thee, so neither must thou be over-eager to die before he call thee; thou mayest not desire death out of discontentment of mind, because of some present miseries and afflictions which lie upon thee; nay, thou mayest not absolutely wish to die, out of a desire to be rid of thy sins, and to be with Christ, but it must be done with a submission to the will of God, if he see it fit, meet and convenient for thee. Though Paul knew it were far better for him to die than to live, yet did he not desire death absolutely, but with a submission to the will of God.

VII. 'Be frequent in reading the holy scriptures,' or cause them to be frequently read unto thee; for there thou shalt find

1. 'Examples of God's mercy shewed to the afflicted.'

2. 'Instructions how to bear and improve thy present visitation.'

3. 'Comfortable promises of support under the sorest trials.' And know for certain, that one promise in the book of God will be more effectual to yield thee comfort on thy death-bed, than all the counsel of thy friends that shall be then about thee.

VIII. 'Be often lifting up thine heart to God in prayer.' And when, through weakness of body and faintness of spirit, thou art not able to pour out thy soul in any set and solemn prayer, send up some short ejaculatory prayers unto God, as that of the poor publican, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner*, Luke xviii. 13. and also that of the poor man, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief*, Mark ix. 24. and that of the apostle, *Lord, increase my faith*, Luke xvii. 5. and that of Stephen, *Lord Jesus receive my spirit*. These ejaculations going from the heart, they are acceptable and pleasing unto God; let us, therefore, as Austin adviseth us, endeavour to die praying, by a frequent breathing forth of these or such like ejaculatory prayers.

IX. 'Be often resigning up thy soul into the hands of God, saying with our blessed Saviour, *Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit*.' Little children for the most part, desire to die in their father's bosom, or upon their mother's lap: even so shouldst thou in the hour of death, cast thy soul into the arms of thy heavenly Father, and rest in the bosom of Jesus Christ.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of the Common Mutual Duties betwixt Husbands and Wives.

HAVING shewed the general directions which appertain to Christians as Christians,

I come now to the particular duties which appertain to thee in thy several and distinct relations. For, it is not sufficient that thou make conscience of the general duties of Christianity, but thou must also be conscionable in the performance of the particular duties of thy several relations, whereby much good is both mutually communicated one to another, and received one from another. Whereas the apostle Paul in setting down the several duties of relations, doth still bring them under three heads, *viz.* husbands and wives, parents and children, masters and servants; I shall follow his method, shewing the duties of each of these.

For the duties of husband and wife, they may be drawn to two heads.

1. Such as are common to both.

2. Such as are proper and peculiar to each, severally.

The common and mutual duties are these.

I. 'A loving affection of one to another.' I call this a mutual duty: because, as the husband is to love his wife, so the wife is to love her husband. Love is a duty which every Christian oweth to another; *Love thy neighbour as thyself*, saith our Saviour, Mat. xxii. 39. where, by *neighbour*, is meant every man, every woman; so that we are bound to love every one, even our enemies, for Christ's sake. But the nearer any are knit together, the more they are bound to this duty of love, and to abound therein. Now, who are so nearly knit together as husband and wife; and, therefore, there ought to be a mutual loving affection between them; and that love which one sheweth to the other, will stir up the other to return that love again, so as there is nothing lost by love.

II. 'Outward concord and agreement.' This should be, *as far as is possible*, *with all men*, Heb. xii. 14. but more especially between husband and wife, who are so nearly knit together. For, without concord and agreement between husband and wife, what comfort can either find in their house? The truth is, every one lives more or less comfortable in his house, as there is concord and agreement there.

For the better preserving of concord and agreement betwixt husband and wife, take these few directions.

1. 'Labour to suppress and keep down all furious passions,' which do usually occasion discord and dissension; especially when one is passionate, it will be the wisdom of the other to act patience, and to express a spirit of meekness, for when both are hot and angry together, then the fire of contention is likely to encrease to such a flame as will not be suddenly quenched; and, therefore, I would commend this rule to married persons, *to beware of both being angry together:* but rather let one be to the other like David's harp, to appease Saul's fury.

2. 'Though the fire of contention be kindled at home, yet let it not break forth into thy neighbour's house;' but be sure thou

keep it within thine own walls. For, it is found by too frequent experience, that differences between man and wife being once divulged, are more hardly made up.

3. 'When any difference is risen, let each strive who should first seek after peace and reconciliation,' for theirs is the glory who first begin. I have read that there was sometimes a variance between two famous philosophers, Aristippus and Aeschines; Aristippus at length cometh to Aeschines, and seeks for peace and reconciliation; and withal said, 'Remember, though I am the elder, and the party wronged, yet I sought the peace: True, said Aeschines, and for this I will ever acknowledge thee the worthier man; for I began the strife, but thou the peace.' But how many of us come short of Aristippus (though an heathen philosopher) in this particular, thinking it a disgrace, first to seek after peace and reconciliation.

III. 'Another mutual duty which husband and wife owe one to another, is prayer.' They ought to pray one for another: in a conscionable performance whereof may husband and wife be helpful to each other, in all things needful to either of them; it being the means which the Lord hath sanctified for obtaining of every good thing, both for ourselves and others. It is recorded of Isaac, 'That he entreated the Lord for his wife, because she was barren, and the Lord was intreated of him,' Gen. xxv. 21. that is, the Lord heard his prayer, and granted his request.

IV. Another mutual duty is, 'A provident care of one another's souls.'

1. If a believing husband, or wife be married to an unbeliever, they ought to use all the means they can to win the other. And if either of you shall be a means of the conversion of the other, how entirely will it knit your affections one to another?

2. If both husband and wife be in a state of grace, they should be watchful one over the other; as to prevent sin in one another, so to redress it the best way they can, when either of them are fallen into sin, by seasonable admonition, yea, and reproof also, if admonition will not serve. Herein husband and wife should more respect the mutual good of one another, than fear the giving of offence.

And it is likewise a special duty incumbent upon husband and wife, to help forward the growth of grace in each other; as by a frequent conferring together of good things, especially of what they hear in the public ministry of the word; so likewise by a constant performing family duties, especially prayer. Though this duty appertain, chiefly to the husband, yet the wife ought to put her husband in mind of it, if he forget it; and to stir him up, if he be backward.

V. Another mutual duty is, 'To conceal and cover the infirmities of one another.' There is no man or woman without their infirmities; it will be, therefore, your wisdom to conceal the same, so far as you can with a good conscience.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Husbands' Duties to their Wives.

HAVING shewed the common mutual duties appertaining both to the husband and the wife, I come now to the special and particular duties belonging to each of them severally.

And first, of the duties of the husband: all which may be comprised under this one word *love;* for we find that often expressly set down, and mentioned, as the chief duty of the husband, Eph. v. 25, 33. Col. iii. 19.

The particulars in which an husband ought to express his love to his wife are these, and such like.

1. 'By honouring her as his companion and yoke-fellow.' The place from whence the woman was taken, *viz. his side,* where his heart lay, implieth as much; for she is as the heart in the body, far more excellent than any other member under the head, and almost equal to the head. It is observable that when the woman was made, she was not taken out of the man's head, because she was not to rule over him; nor out of his feet, because she was not to be subject to him, as a slave or servant; but out of his side, that he might take her as his yoke-fellow and companion; which he ought to do, considering they are joint-partakers of many special prerogatives which are common to both; being joint parents of the same children, joint governors of the same household, joint-partakers of the same goods, (in regard of the use of them) and joint-heirs of the grace of life, as the Apostle Peter speaketh, 1 Pet. iii. 7.

2. 'By delighting in her.' This the wise man commendeth, Prov. v. 19. 'Let her be as the loving hind, and pleasant roe; let her breasts satisfy thee at all times, and be thou ravished always with her love;' that is, be thou enamoured with her, even to delight. And, truly, if a man exceed not the bounds of civility and sobriety, his affections towards his wife cannot be too great. Perhaps thy wife is not so beautiful, nor so delightful in herself, as some other women are: Yet as parents love and delight in their children, not so much because they are comely, witty, or the like, but because they are their children; so thou oughtest to delight in thy wife, not so much because she is beautiful, wise, or the like, but because she is thy wife, even the wife which the Lord hath allotted unto thee; believing her to be the fittest wife for thee, with whom thou oughtest to rest satisfied.

3. 'By treating her mildly.' The husband must shew himself mild and gentle in all things towards his wife. This mildness is urged by the apostle under the contrary vice, *bitterness;* for, saith he, *Husbands, love your wives, and be not bitter against them,* Col.

iii. 19. Where *bitterness* is imposed to *mildness*, *gentleness*, *familiarity*, and the like. So that both the speech and carriage of the husband towards his wife, must be with much mildness and gentleness: If he instruct her, it must be with all *meekness* and *mildness*; if he command any thing to be done, it should be by way of *intreating*; he should not be too peremptory in commanding: if he reprove her, it must be with all *mildness* and *meekness* imaginable.

Q. Whether an husband may lawfully strike, or beat his wife?

A. Though an husband hath some authority over his wife; yet, it doth not appear, that he hath any power or liberty thereupon to beat her.

1. For first, we find it neither commanded, nor commended to us in the scriptures, there being neither precept nor precedent for it.

2. What fruit can be expected from an husband's beating of his wife? but a return of blows and scratches to the utmost of her strength. For this is most certain, that if a man who hath no authority over another, strike him, he will turn against him, and do him all the mischief that he can. Now therefore, there being no ground to persuade wives, that their husbands have such authority over them, as to strike them for their faults; what hope is there that they will patiently bear it, and be bettered by it; or rather, is it not more likely, that they will not only rise against them; but, if they can, over-master their husbands, and ever after cast off all subjection to them?

CHAP. XXV.

Of the Duties of Wives.

HAVING shewed the duties of husbands, in reference to their wives; I come now to shew the duties of wives towards their husbands.

As the main duty on the husband's part was *love*; so, the main duty on the wife's is *subjection*, Eph. v. 22. under which, many particulars are comprised.

The subjection of the wife to the husband, implieth two things:

1. 'That she acknowledge a superiority in her husband.'

2. 'That she put in practice such duties as do issue and flow from the acknowledgment of that superiority.'

1. The former is not only a duty, but the ground of all other duties whatsoever; for, till the wife be fully satisfied about the superiority of her husband, no duty will be performed by her as it ought. Therefore wives ought to learn this point in the first

place, viz. *That their husbands are their superiors;* which clearly appeareth.

1. 'By the order of the creation.' The man was first created, and thereupon had the birth-right.

2. 'By the institution of God,' who said to the woman, *Thy desire shall be subject to his*, and he shall *rule over thee*, Gen. iii. 16.

3. 'By the names and titles given in scripture to the husband,' which do imply a superiority in him, as *lord*, 1 Pet. iii. 6. *guide*, Prov. ii. 17. *head*, 1 Cor. xi. 3, &c. I grant indeed, there is but a very little disparity, and small inequality between husband and wife, being both governors of the same family, parents of the same children; and *heirs together of the grace of life;* yet, God having so expressly appointed subjection on the wife's part, it ought to be acknowledged.

II. As the wife ought to acknowledge and yield a superiority in her husband; so she ought to put in practice such duties as do issue and flow from the acknowledgment thereof; which may be branched out into three particulars:

1. 'Honour.' This God requires of all inferiors towards their superiors, in the fifth commandment; and therefore is a duty incumbent upon all wives, in reference to their husbands; who are their superiors, as being their *lords*, *guides*, and *heads*. This honour wives ought to express.

2. 'By their inward esteem of their husbands,' accounting them worthy of honour for their place sake, because they are their husbands, whether they be richer or poorer, older or younger than themselves.

3. 'By their outward respect,' which they should manifest, both by their reverend carriage and speech, giving them such titles as signify superiority, and favour of respect.

4. Another branch of the wife's subjection, is *meekness;* which she ought to shew; as in a quiet taking of reproof from her husband, so, in being willing to be advised by her husband, and ready to follow his good advice: yet, if the wife hath a clearer sight, and seeth better than her husband what God hath commanded, though she may not *usurp authority over her husband;* yet, she may, and must, *in all humility*, persuade and advise him to that which is good, and happy is that husband (if he can see his own happiness) in whose bosom the Lord hath laid so good a counsellor.

5. Another branch of the wife's subjection is, *obedience;* and indeed, this is the principal part of that subjection, which the apostle requireth of wives to their husbands, *Wives submit yourselves unto your own husbands*, Eph. v. 22. And, the apostle Peter commands this duty unto wives by the example of Sarah, *who obeyed* Abraham, 1 Pet. iii. 6.

CHAP. XXVI.

Of the Duties of Parents.

HAVING shewed the duties of husbands and wives; I come now to shew the duties of parents and children.

The duties of parents in reference to their children, are these:

I. 'To see that they be admitted unto the church by baptism in convenient time;' that is, within some few days after they are born.

II. 'To train them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord.' This duty the apostle Paul in special presseth upon parents, Eph. vi. 4. *Ye parents*, saith he, *bring up your children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.* Let your main care be not, how to make them rich, but religious; how to work the sincere fear of God into their souls, that, as God, of his infinite goodness, hath made them your children by natural generation, so, you should strive and endeavour to make them his children, by a godly and religious education. Austin in his fifth book of confessions, speaking of his mother Monica, saith, *Majori solicitudine me parturiebat spiritu, quam carne*, &c. 'That she travailed with greater care, and stronger pain for his spiritual birth, than for his natural birth.' And truly, the like care and pains should be in all parents towards their children: not thinking it sufficient that they have brought them up to some good trade, whereby they may live another day; but they must likewise bring them up in the fear of God, teaching them to serve him here, that they may live with him eternally in the heavens.

For your better help herein, see the directions in my explication of the principles of religion, Quest. 14.

III. Another duty of parents towards their children, is, 'To provide for the bodies of their children, as well as for their souls.' This, the apostle intimateth, 1 Tim. v. 8. where he saith, 'If any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he is worse than an infidel,' *viz.* in this point, because, he by the light of nature knoweth this to be a duty. But yet, beware of withholding thy hand from the works of charity, because of many children; nay, rather, the more children thou hast, the more liberal thou oughtest to be, that so the Lord may double his blessing upon thee and thine; for the seed of the merciful, saith the Psalmist, *are blessed*, Psalm xxxvii. 26. And, saith the apostle, *He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully*, 2 Cor. ix. 6.

IV. It is the duty of parents, 'To rebuke their children when they do amiss,' whereby you may both free yourselves from the guilt of your children's sin, and prevent much evil in your chil-

dren. For, questionless, the want thereof, is one special cause of so much wickedness and profaneness in many children.

V. 'When reproof prevails not, you ought to correct them for their faults.' This duty the scripture often presseth upon parents, Prov. xix. 18. *Chasten thy son while there is hope; and let not thy soul spare for his crying;* or, as the original properly signifieth, *Let not thy soul spare to his destruction*; intimating, that the father's sparing of his child, may tend *to his destruction;* or, as we use to say, *bring him to the gallows.*

VI. Another duty is, 'To bring up their children in some honest calling;' it being the ordinary means as to prevent idleness, which is the bane of youth, so to enable them to live in the world, and be serviceable to the kingdom wherein they live. In the choice of a calling, respect should be had, as to the children's ability and fitness, so, to their disposition and inclination, carefully observing to what callings they are most disposed.

VII. 'To provide fit matches and marriages for their children;' it being the means the Lord hath sanctified for the keeping their bodies chaste and undefiled. This, the Lord gave in commandment to his people of old, by the prophet Jeremiah, chap. xxix. 6. saying, *Take wives to your sons; and give your daughters to husbands.* In the choice of a husband or wife, the parents ought to have greater respect to piety and prudence, than to wealth and riches, for thereby, shall they procure much happiness to their children in their marriages.

CHAP. XXVII.

Of Children's Duties.

HAVING shewed the duties of parents towards their children; I come now to shew the duties of children in reference to their parents; which may be brought to three heads, *viz.*

I. 'Obedience.'

II. 'Honour.'

III. 'Gratitude.'

I. 'Obedience.' This is often pressed in scripture, as the main and principal duty of children, in reference to their parents. Their obedience ought to be expressed:

1. 'By a cheerful yielding to their precepts and commands, readily doing what they require of them, and that for conscience sake, even to the command of God, who requireth this duty at their hands; for, saith the apostle, Col. iii. 20. *Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing to the Lord.* And again, Eph. vi. 1. *Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this*

is right. Yet, children are no further bound to obey their earthly parents, than may stand with obedience to God their heavenly Father.

2. 'Children ought to express their obedience to their parents, in hearkening to their good instructions.' It being the duty of parents to instruct their children; it must needs be the duty of children to hearken unto, and to obey their good instructions, and more especially in two things:

1. 'In the choice of their calling.'

2. 'In the choice of their matches.'

1. The former is commended in the scripture by the approved practice of godly children, as of Jacob, Samuel, David, and others. And truly, in regard that parents are the means of bringing up their children in the world, till they are fit for callings; and that not without much care and cost; is it not most meet and just, that their counsel and advice should be taken in the choice of their calling, and course of life? And, as in their callings, so, likewise in their marriages, and not to marry without their consent; which the very light of nature teacheth, and God himself commandeth, when he layeth a charge upon parents, to give *their daughters to husbands, and to take wives for their sons*, Deut. vii. 3. which doth necessarily imply, that children ought not to take unto themselves wives or husbands, without, especially against, their parents consent. And, therefore, such children as shall adventure to join themselves in marriage without their parents' consent. How can they expect a blessing from God upon them? Yea, they have rather cause to fear the curse of God to fall upon them, and their posterity. How did the curse of God fall upon Esau, and his posterity, because he married against the consent of his parents, *taking unto him wives, which were a grief of mind unto Isaac and Rebekah?* Gen xxvi. 34, 35.

II. Another duty which children owe unto their parents, is, 'Honour and reverence.' This the Lord in express terms requireth of all children in the fifth commandment, *Honour thy father and thy mother*, Exod. xx. 12. This honour and reverence children must manifest:

1. 'By their modest silence before their parents,' not forward to speak in their presence without leave from them.

2. 'By their humble speeches,' speaking unto them submissively and reverently, giving them fitting titles, as *father*, *sir*, and the like.

3. 'By their respective carriage;' which they should shew by uncovering their heads, bowing their body, standing up before them, with the like. Joseph, though highly advanced, yet, when he appeared before his father with his two sons, the text saith, *He bowed himself with his face to the earth.* Yea, though his father was blind through age, and therefore could not see what respect his son shewed to him; yet, notwithstanding, he bowed to the

very ground. And when Solomon heard of the approach of his mother, the text saith, 'He rose from the throne to meet her, and bowed himself unto her, and set her at his right hand,' Kings ii. 19. and all this in token of reverence, and to give good example unto others.

III. Another duty which children owe to their parents, is, 'Gratitude,' a thankful requital of their love and care, which the apostle, in express terms, requireth of all children; namely, to requite their parents; *for that*, saith he, *is good and acceptable before God.* This requital may, and ought to be manifested several ways: As,

1. 'By relieving them according to their need, if God give ability.' Joseph's practice herein is set before us for a pattern, who, being in prosperity, and his father in want, first sent him corn freely out of Egypt, and afterwards sent for him into Egypt, and there furnished him plentifully with corn, and all other needful things; insomuch that the text saith, 'Joseph nourished his father and his brethren, and all his father's household with bread, according to their families,' Gen. xlvii. 12. And it is recorded of Ruth, that she did not only glean for Naomi her mother-in-law, but having food often given her by Boaz's servants for her refreshment, *she reserved part of it, and gave it to her mother*, Ruth ii. 18. I have read of a daughter, whose father being sentenced to be famished to death, and none therefore being suffered to bring him meat, she gave him suck with her own breasts. How blame-worthy then, yea, and unnatural are such children, whose parents being poor, and themselves able to relieve them, do notwithstanding, suffer them to want things needful? St. John saith, 'That the love of God dwelleth not in him, who shutteth up his bowels of compassion from his brother,' 1 John iii. 17. How then can it dwell in that child, who shutteth up his bowels of compassion against his own father or mother; who having not only a sufficiency, but also an affluency, of worldly things, suffers his parents to want necessaries?

2. 'By loving their parents:' And truly that love which parents bear unto their children, and have manifested by bringing them up in the world, should, by the law of equity, stir up in children a love to their parents; for love deserveth love.

3. 'By concealing and covering their infirmities;' which will evidence the truth of their love to their parents, and procure God's blessing upon them. Shem and Japhet we read were blessed for this, because they would not behold the nakedness of their father, when being drunken, he lay uncovered in his tent; and Ham, for discovering and making known his father's nakedness, was cursed of God. As therefore, if children would avoid Ham's curse, let them carefully shun Ham's sin, forbearing to brazen abroad their father's infirmities.

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of the Duties of Masters.

THE last head of family relations, is Masters and Servants.

The duties of masters in reference to their servants may be brought under two heads.

I. 'Such as concern the bodies of their servants.'

II. 'Such as concern the souls of their servants.'

The duties of masters in reference to the bodies of their servants are,

1. 'To provide fitting raiment for them, such as may fence them against the extremity of the weather.' I mean, if by agreement they are bound to find them apparel, as is the condition of most apprentices.

2. 'To give them wholesome and sufficient food.' As their food must be wholesome, for the preservation of their health, so sufficient for the increasing of their strength, that they may be the better enabled with cheerfulness to do their master's service.

3. 'To afford them physic when they are sick.' For masters are commanded *to give unto their servants that which is just and equal*, Col. iv. 1. And is it not just and equal, that those servants who labour for their masters in time of their health, should be cared for by their masters in the time of their sickness? The Centurion's care for his sick servant, is left upon record for our imitation, who used the best means he knew for his servant's recovery; which was to go unto Christ, Mat. viii. 6. The humanity of this Centurion, being a Gentile, may be a witness against the inhumanity of many Christians, who take little care for their sick servants.

4. 'Not to oppress them with labour, by over-working them;' requiring more of them than they are well able to perform. This would be cruelty in a man to his beast, much more in a master to his servants. Indeed, the Egyptians dealt so cruelly with the Israelites, 'that they groaned under their burdens, whose groans ascended unto the ears of God; who, thereupon came down to deliver them from their bondage,' Exod. iii. 7, 8. And let God's hearing the cry of those oppressed servants, and revenging them of their oppressions, make all masters beware of laying heavy burdens upon their servants requiring more of them than they are well able to perform, lest their groans ascend up unto God.

5. 'To pay them their wages when it is due, without delaying it, or defrauding them of any part thereof.' It is reckoned in scripture as a crying sin, to keep back and withhold the labourer's or servant's wages; a sin that crieth unto God for vengeance,

who is the poor's avenger; and as he taketh special notice of their wrongs and oppressions, so will he take care to avenge them.

II. The duties of masters in reference to the souls of their servants are;

1. 'To instruct and catechise their servants in the principles of religion.' For, if it be a duty incumbent upon all masters of families, to provide for the nourishment of the bodies of their servants, how much more then should they be careful for the nourishment of their souls? Yea, let all masters of families know, that they are as expressly charged to teach and catechise their servants, as the minister is to instruct his flock; witness God's command to the Israelites; 'Thou shalt talk of my laws when thou sittest in thine house; and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up,' Deut. vi. 57. And God hath manifested his approbation of this, by commending Abraham for his practice in it, Gen. xviii. 12.

2. 'To cause the scriptures to be frequently read in the family.' We read, that under the law the people of Israel were commanded to cause the words of the law to be written upon the posts of their houses; to the end, they might be frequently read by every one in the house. And, saith the apostle Paul, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you*, Col. iii. 16. By the *word of Christ*, the apostle meaneth the doctrine of the gospel, which was published by Christ, and is contained in the Old and New Testament. *Let this word*, saith the apostle, *dwell in you;* that is, 'be ye much employed in the reading of it, as in your closets, so, in your families;' or, as Calvin interprets it, 'Make the word familiar to you,' by giving it household entertainment. But oh! what a stranger is the word to most families? How seldom is it read amongst them? If that house be an hell where the scriptures are not read, as Luther said, Oh how many houses are there so many hells, for want of reading the scriptures?

3. 'To pray daily in and with their family.' To offer up a morning and an evening sacrifice of prayer and praises unto God in their family. For the better stirring you up to this much-neglected duty of *family-prayer;* I shall commend a few arguments,

1. 'Taken from the practice of the faithful in all ages:' We read, it was Abraham's practice wheresoever he came, to build an altar to God, where God should be called upon, jointly by him and his family, Gen. xii. 8. and xiii. 4. and xxi. 33. We read likewise, it was Job's practice, as you shall find, Job i. 5. And Joshua's as appears by his protestation, *As for me and my family, we will serve the Lord*, Josh. xxiv. 15. In the New Testament, it is recorded of Cornelius, 'that he was a devout man, who feared God with his house, and prayed to God always,' Acts x. 2. which implieth he kept a constant course in prayer. Now these things

are recorded for our learning, that so we might write after their copy; by following their example in so excellent a duty.

2. Every master in his family, is both a King, a Prophet, and a Priest. He is a *king*, to govern his family; a *prophet*, to teach and instruct his family; and a *priest*, to offer the sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving, not only for himself, but also for all those who are committed to his charge. Let, therefore, all masters of families know, that it is their duty, which God will require of them, not only to pray by themselves (and yet I would to God, all did but that) but also to call together all their family, and to be their mouth unto God in prayer, unto which they may be encouraged by God's gracious promise, 'That where two or three are gathered together in Christ's name, there he will be in the midst of them,' Mat. xviii. 20.

3. 'A master of a family, by his daily offering up a morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise, will make his house an house of prayer, or a little temple;' which God will fill with his presence; yea, a Christian's house is hereby made God's church, by a constant performance of holy duties, which is a great honour unto a family.

4. 'Family prayers are a special means to bring down God's blessing upon the whole family, and upon all their lawful undertakings.' As God blessed the house of Obed-edom for the ark's sake: so, will God bless those families in which his name is called upon; for godliness is profitable unto all things, as well in families, as in any other societies.

5. 'Another argument may be taken from the danger of neglecting this duty of family-prayer,' for such do incur the danger of God's wrath and fury: 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not; and upon the families that call not upon thy name,' saith the Prophet, Jer. x. 25. Which words, contain a fearful imprecation against all prayerless families. And it is observable that such as neglect this duty of prayer in their family, are joined with the heathen; and truly, very fitly, for, wherein do they differ from the heathens, who have not so much as a form of godliness in their families, upon whom God will pour out his fury? O think of this, all ye who make no conscience of praying daily with your families, consider it well, and lay it to heart. Are ye not under the prophetical curse, and liable to the pouring forth of God's wrath and fury, both upon yourselves and upon all that belong unto you? Even your wives, your children, your servants; yea, and very wares and goods? It may well be written upon the doors, of such houses, as one saith, 'Lord have mercy on us:' for, surely the plague of God is not far from them, but nigh unto them.

Obj. 'Methinks I hear some saying, they are convinced of the

necessity of this duty, and fain would they do it: but Oh! they cannot, they know not how to pray.'

Ans. I would advise such, rather to read some good prayer, than altogether to omit the duty; for, many masters of families, who are not able to conceive a prayer of themselves; yet, if they meet with a form of prayer answerable to their occasions, can pray heartily and earnestly. Yet, I would not have them ever content themselves with reading a form of prayer, but, to labor to pray of themselves without a book: and for your help therein, take these two directions:

1. Carefully observe the prayers of others, their order and method.

2. Take notice of your own sins in particular, and your particular wants, what graces you stand in need of and desire: As also, take notice of the particular blessings God bestoweth on you; and thereby, you will be enabled in some measure to pray of yourselves, by confessing your sins unto God, and begging as the pardon of them in and through the merits of Jesus Christ, so, such graces as you stand in need of. And when once, in any competent measure, you can pray for youselves, then, by degrees you may come to pray with your families.

CHAP. XXIX.

Of Servants' Duties to their Masters.

HAVING shewed the duties of Masters in reference to their Servants; come we now to the duties of Servants in reference to their Masters; which may be brought to three heads, *viz.*

I. 'Obedience.'

II. 'Diligence.'

III. 'Faithfulness.'

I. 'Obedience,' is that the Apostle St. Paul often presseth upon servants, as a plain and principal duty. And, indeed, no inferiors are more bound to obedience, than servants: Your obedience must be manifested in two particulars;

1. 'In a ready yielding to your master's commands.' For, indeed, it is the proper work of a servant to hearken to his master's precepts, and to yield ready obedience unto him.

2. 'In a patient bearing of reproofs and corrections, yea, though the correction be wrongfully inflicted without just cause, which the Apostle Peter expressly requireth of servants; for, saith he, 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19. *&c.* 'Servants be subject to your masters with all fear; not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward: for this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience towards

God, endure grief, suffering wrongfully: for what glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye take it patiently:' this is acceptable with God. And if unjust correction ought patiently to be borne, then much more unjust reproofs. But, if the reproofs or correction be just, then you ought speedily to amend and reform the thing for which you are justly reproved or corrected. For the manner of servants' obedience, the apostle sets it down in several expressions. As,

1. It must be a *sincere* obedience. This, the apostle Paul, Col. iii. 22. sets down with two expressions in one verse.

1. Negatively, *Not with eye-service.*

2. Affirmatively, *With singleness of heart.*

1. *Not with eye-service*, which implieth a mere outward service only to satisfy the eye of man: *But with singleness of heart;* as if he had said, 'Let not your obedience be *hypocritical*, merely to be seen of your masters; but let it be in *truth and uprightness of heart*, doing service to your masters in the sincerity of your hearts, without any hypocrisy or dissimulation, laboring in your master's absence, as well as in his presence, remembering God's eye is ever upon you.'

2. Your obedience must be *conscientious*, 'for conscience sake, because the Lord requireth it at your hands,' Col. ii. 23. so much the apostle expresseth, Col. iii. 23. for, speaking to servants, he saith, *Whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord;* that is, whatsoever service you do to your masters, do it for the Lord's sake, because he hath commanded it; therefore, do it out of conscience to the word and command of God, who requireth you to yield sincere service and obedience to your masters; for, this will stir you up to do it after the best manner you can, that so God may accept of it, and reward you for it.

3. Your obedience must be *universal*, 'unto every thing which they require of you;' so much the apostle expresseth, Col. iii. 22. *Servants*, saith he, *obey your masters in all things;* 'not only in such things as seem easy, and most pleasing to your fancy, but whatsoever they command you, being not contrary to the word of God, but are in themselves honest and lawful;' for, if they shall command you to *lie*, *swear*, or to *use false weights* and *measures*, which are things forbidden of God, you ought not *therein* to yield to their commands, but to say unto them, as Joseph did to his mistress, 'How shall I do this great wickedness, and sin against God?' Though he was a servant to his master's commands, yet, would he not be a servant to his mistress's lusts.

II. Another duty incumbent upon servants, is, 'Diligence in dispatching their master's work and business,' without loitering, or minding their own ease and pleasure; but, as their strength and time is their masters, so they ought to put forth their strength, and employ their whole time in their master's service; I say, their

whole time, excepting some part of it, for their secret devotions, as their morning and evening prayers unto God: for servants must have respect to their Master in heaven, as well as to their master on earth: and make as much conscience of performing their duty unto him, as to their masters according to the flesh; for, indeed, the Lord is the best master, who gives the best wages, and largest rewards.

III. Another duty is, 'Faithfulness.' Servants must shew all faithfulness to their masters, as the apostle expresseth, Tit. ii. 10. Both that trust that is reposed in servants: and that account that is to be taken of them require faithfulness. Do you not remember what the Lord said to his steward, *Give an account of thy stewardship?* Luke xvi. 22. And were not all the servants to whom talents were committed, called to an account? Mat. xxv. 19. How then doth it concern all servants, to be faithful to their masters, which they ought to express both in their words and deeds?

1. In *words*, not daring to excuse any unwarrantable act, with the telling of a lie, which is to add sin unto sin; let all lying servants consider the fearful judgment executed on Gehazi, who, when his master asked him where he had been, presently answered him with a lie, saying, *Thy servant went no whither;* whereupon he went out of his presence a leper, as white as snow, 2 Kings, v. 25.

2. In *deeds*, and that several ways.

1. Not disposing of their master's goods at their own pleasures, either to themselves, by taking more than is allowed them, or to others, by giving any part thereof away. Many servants think, they may lawfully give away victuals, and other things of their masters to the poor; but, though they may inform their masters and mistresses, of such things in the house meet to be given away; and likewise, of persons fit to receive such alms, yet, have they no power of themselves to give away any thing of their masters: and pretence of charity, is no good excuse for theft.

2. 'Not pilfering and purloining their master's goods to their private use,' which the apostle expressly condemneth in servants, Tit. ii. 10. Let all pilfering servants know, 'That there is a book full of curses and plagues, against every one that stealeth or sweareth; which book is large, twenty cubits long, and ten cubits broad; and yet is filled with curses that shall come swiftly upon them,' as the prophet Zechariah speaketh, Zech. v. 2, 3.

3. 'But rather labouring to preserve and increase their master's estate, by all good and lawful means:' Thus, the apostle Paul expresseth the duties of servants, Tit. ii. 10. *Not purloining, but shewing all good fidelity* to their masters, in increasing their estates; which is highly commended in that faithful servant in the parable, for which he received from his Lord and Master, both a gracious *approbation* in those words, 'Well done, good and

faithful servant, thou hast been faithful over a few things ;' and also, a plentiful *remuneration* in the next words, ' I will make thee ruler over many things ; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,' Mat. xxv. 21. So that he that is faithful in a little, taketh the best course to become ruler of much, if the Lord see it good for him.

THE CHRISTIAN HOUSEHOLDER.

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

As for me, and my house, we will serve the Lord.

CHAP. I.

The parts of the text, and observations thence arising.

THE sum of these words is, 'the good man's godly resolution, to serve the Lord with his household.' In which we may observe four particulars:

1. 'The person resolving,' viz. Joshua; he it is who makes this resolution.
2. 'The order of his resolution;' first himself will serve the Lord, and then *his house.*
3. 'The extent of his resolution;' viz. his whole house, *as for me and my house.*
4. 'The matter resolved on;' and this is, *to serve God.*

Each of these might afford us a distinct point of doctrine: but I shall wave them all, and insist upon one, which as it comprehendeth the main scope of the words, so it best suiteth with the scope of my intention in this discourse; which is to press all parents, masters and governors of families, to a constant and conscionable performance of holy and religious duties, in and with their families.

The point of doctrine is this:

Observe. 'It is a duty incumbent upon parents and masters of families, to be careful, that not only themselves, but all under their charge, even their whole household, do faithfully serve the Lord.'

It is not sufficient for governors of families to be *good christians* themselves, but they ought to be *christian governors:* it is not enough to be themselves religious, but they must train up all under their charge in the knowledge and practice of religion. And the truth is; good Christians they cannot be, who are not *christian governors:* he hath little religion himself, that doth not faithfully propagate it in his family. Thus Joshua, as a master of a family, undertaketh not only for himself, but also for his household, that he with them, and they with him, *should serve the Lord.* Yea, and in all ages such as have been most eminent in grace, have been most exact in their family-duties: witness Abraham, the father of the faithful, of whom God himself giveth this

testimony, 'I know Abraham, that he will command his children and his household after him that they shall keep the way of the Lord,' *&c.* Gen. xviii. 19. And Jacob his grandchild walking in the steps of his father Abraham, was not content at Bethel to worship God sincerely himself, but he chargeth his family 'to put away the strange gods which were among them, and to serve the true God,' according to the prescribed rule of his word; Gen. xxxv. 2. David, though he was a King, and so had the care of a whole kingdom upon him, yet his state affairs was no privilege to exempt him from the religious ordering and governing of his family: And, therefore, he professeth, Psal. ci. 'That he would walk within his house with a perfect heart,' that is, 'sincerely discharge the duties belonging to the governor of an house: yea, under the law, we find that the *fathers* amongst the Israelites were commanded to teach their *children* the meaning of the *passover*, and of the *feast of unleavened bread.*

And, that we may not think this a *legal* precept abolished in the time of the *gospel*, the apostle giveth a general charge to all Christian parents, to 'bring up their children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,' Eph. vi. 4. Yea, by the practice of the *primitive Christians* who lived in the days of the apostles, it doth appear, that so soon as any governor of a family was converted, and professed the Christian faith, he still engaged his family to serve God; it is said of Cornelius, that *he was a devout man, and one that feared God with all his house*, Acts x. 2. And it is recorded of Lydia *that she was baptized and her household*, Acts xvi. 15. And it is said of the Jailor, that *he believed in God with all his house.* Yea, the houses of the faithful in the primitive times were styled *churches*, Rom. xvi. 5. 1 Cor. xvi. 19. which implieth, that their private families were so piously ordered, and instructed, that they seemed to be *little churches*, rather than *ordinary houses;* having taken up Joshua's resolution, *As for me and my house we will serve the Lord.*

The point being thus proved by *scripture* and *examples;* come we now to the reasons, for the farther confirmation thereof.

CHAP. II.

The Reasons of the Point.

Reason 1. MAY be taken *from the command of God*, who hath commanded as much, saying, Deut. vi. 7. 'Thou shalt teach my laws diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sitteth in thine house,' &c. and God hath manifested his approbation thereof, by commending Abraham 'for

commanding his children, and household to keep the ways of the Lord,' Gen. xviii. 19. So that, to whomsoever the Lord hath given this honour to make him a father of children, a master over servants, a governor over an household, of them he requireth this duty, to *teach* and *instruct* all under their charge.

Reason 2. 'Every man's house is his private *charge*, which he must oversee, it is his flock which he must attend.' You will all acknowledge, that every minister's flock is his charge, and that it is a most dreadful thing for any to neglect them. And have not you as great a charge of your family, as the minister hath of his flock? yea, doubtless, I dare boldly say, that every parent, and master of a family is as deeply charged with the souls of their children, and servants, as the minister is with the souls of his flock. If, therefore, your children and servants live and die in their sins, through your negligence, their blood will be required at your hands. 'Yea, let all parents and masters of families know and consider that those children and servants, who, by the neglect of their duty to them, shall perish in their sins, will curse them for ever hereafter, amongst the fiends, and damned in hell;' crying out, '*woe and alas*, that ever we were born of such irreligious parents; and served such wicked and ungodly masters, that had no care of the salvation of our souls; but suffered us to run headlong into these everlasting flames!' Oh that all parents and masters of families would seriously consider these things, and in time labour to prevent them, by a conscionable discharge of the duties belonging to their places and relations: And that with all speed, while it is day: 'the night cometh when no man can work.' John ix. 4.

Reason 3. 'Justice and equity requireth this at your hands to do your utmost endeavour to train up your children and servants in the fear of God, and to instruct them in the ways of godliness;' that as they help you in many things, so you should be a means to help them in this; that as God of his goodness hath made them your children and servants, so you, in way of gratitude, should strive to make them his children and servants. And truly, though you feed them well, and clothe them well, and provide well for them; yea, and teach them how to live another day, to live as men; yet if you teach them not withal the fear of God whereby they may live as Christians, which will make them live for ever; wherein do you differ from *heathenish parents* and *pagan masters?* for even they will not be wanting in the former things; which the apostle implieth, where he saith, *He that provideth not for his family, is worse than an infidel*, 1 Tim. v. 8. And, if you go no further; than to make outward provision for the bodies of your children and servants, you are no better than infidels and heathens.

And therefore how doth it concern you who are parents and

masters of families, to have a special care of the souls of your children and servants, by a conscionable performance of holy and religious duties amongst them; as *praying*, *reading*, *catechising*, and the like; whereby you will not only go beyond all the heathens in the world, but likewise gain an hopeful evidence to your own souls, of the truth of grace in you; and of the sincerity of your profession, that ye are Christians indeed.

Reason 4. 'The curse of God hangs over those families in which religious duties are altogether neglected;' yea, it abideth in their houses; as the wise man expresseth, Prov. iii. 33. 'The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked.' Howsoever they may seem to abound and flourish in all worldly wealth, and riches, yet the curse of God is upon all that they enjoy: for, as the Lord speaketh by his prophet Malachi, Mal. ii. 2. 'He will curse their blessings;' that is, whatsoever, outward good things they did enjoy should be cursed to them, whereupon saith Eliphaz, in Job, chap. v. 3. 'I saw him taking root, but I cursed his habitation,' that this, 'I saw him seemingly settled in his outward prosperity, but, by the eye of faith, I likewise saw a curse hanging over his house and family, over his wealth and riches!'

Reason 5. Another reason may be taken 'from the manifold benefits and advantages which usually follow upon a conscionable performance of these duties of family religion.'

1. Religious duties conscientiously performed will bring down God's blessing upon yourselves and your relations; upon your estate, and all your undertakings: As God blessed Obed-edom, and all his household, for the *ark's sake*, so questionless will the Lord bless those families wherein holy duties are faithfully performed; for 'godliness is profitable unto all things, having the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.' 1 Tim. iv. 8. whereupon saith the wise man, Prov. xiv. 11. 'The house of the wicked shall be overturned, but the tabernacle of the upright shall flourish:' And, therefore, the Psalmist pronounceth them *blessed* who thus fear the Lord, saying, 'blessed is he that feareth the Lord, and walketh in his ways, for thou shalt eat the labour of thine hand; happy shalt thou be, and it shall be well with thee,' Psalm cxxviii. 1, 2, 3, 4. How then can such expect a blessing from God either upon themselves, or upon their relations, or upon their pains and endeavours, who do not set up God's worship in their houses, seeing it is that whereby God's blessing is entailed.

2. Those children and servants who are religiously educated and principled in their youth, are likeliest to prove comforts to their parents and masters. O what a comfort must it needs be to thee, who art a master of a family, to see thy household (through the blessing of God on thy care and pains) to be walking heaven-ward? yea, when thou comest to lie upon thy death-bed, Oh what a com-

fort will it then be to thee, that thou hast good ground to believe that thy children are God's children, and the servants of Jesus Christ; thou mayest then, with stronger confidence, commend them unto God's fatherly care and protection, and, with greater assurance, expect God's blessing upon them after thy death.

3. There is no such means to make your children loving and dutiful unto you, and your servants faithful in the discharge of their duty, as to instruct them in the principles of religion, and to plant the fear of God in their hearts: in which respect Solomon saith, *A godly son maketh a glad father*, *viz.* by his dutiful and respectful carriage towards him. And that servant who shall find true grace either first wrought, or further encreased in him by his master's means, will endeavour with the utmost of his power to do him what faithful service he can, in way of thankfulness, and gratitude.

So that, if parents and masters of families, respect either that charge God hath laid upon them, whereof they are to give an account to him at the *great day;* or that good and benefit which themselves may reap thereby; they will see good and just ground, to be diligent and constant in the discharge of holy and religious duties with their families.

Reason 6. Another reason may be taken from 'the manifold mischiefs which usually follow, and accompany the neglect of family-duties.'

1. From hence comes all domestic brawlings and contentions, hence it is that the house is divided against itself; husband against wife, and wife against husband; master against servant, and servant against master; parent against child, and child against parent; which would be prevented, were the Lord better known, and more duly worshipped amongst them; for where God is served with perfect purity, there is perfect peace; but where God is not served, there is no peace, but jars and contentions, strife and debate; which giveth great advantage unto Satan, the arch-enemy of mankind, 'who like a roaring lion walketh about continually, seeking whom he may devour,' 1 Pet. v. 8.

2. From hence it is that the magistrates are enforced to execute the penalties of the laws upon so many: namely, because they are not religiously educated, but suffered to have their wills in their youth; which appeareth from the sad complaints of many malefactors at the place of execution, against their parents and masters, for their careless omission of their duty towards them: saying, if they had had any care or conscience of our education, if they had corrected and restrained us betimes from our wicked courses, we had never come to this dog's death and shameful end.

3. From hence it is that so many families are so dissolute and profane, abounding with all manner of sin and wickedness: as *lying*, *swearing*, *sabbath-breaking*, *drinking*, *whoring*, and the like;

as if they were a seminary of little devils, an household of hellish fiends. And truly, when families leave God, in not doing the good they should; God leaves families, to do the evil they should not. So that sin hath there free place, where God's service hath no place: and sins of commission do usually follow sins of omission, it being ordinary with God to punish one sin with another; to punish the neglect of duty with the committing of sin, by leaving men so to themselves, that they break forth into the committing of great and heinous sins.—A general complaint there is in these days, of the undutifulness of servants; yea, and of the loose lewd lives of both in many families; whereof if we would search the true ground and cause, we shall find it rather in the *superiors* than in the inferiors: for howsoever inferiors cannot be excused, yet questionless the fault is chiefly in *superiors* and *governors;* because they are careless and negligent in the discharge of their duty towards them, not praying with them, nor catechising and instructing them, as they should: for where religious duties are shut out of any family, there usually the door is set wide open to looseness and profaneness.

4. The neglect of religious duties in thy family, will make thee guilty of murder, even of soul-murder, which is the greatest of all. For whereas the souls as well as the bodies of thy children, and servants, are committed to thy care and charge; if any of them should perish through thy default, then thou art deeply guilty of their eternal death and damnation, and their blood will be required at thy hands: As Jacob was accountable to Laban for the loss of every lamb or sheep, (*at his hand was it required*) so is every master of a family accountable to God, for every soul under his roof: if any of them perish through his default, God will require it at his hands. God will require the blood of thy child, the blood of thy servants at thy hand one day: if therefore, you would be free from the blood of your children, and servants, train them up in the fear and nurture of the Lord; pray for them, and with them, catechise them, &c.

The point being thus confirmed by scripture and reason, come we now to the uses thereof.

CHAP. III.

An use of Reproof to all Parents and Masters of Families, who make no Conscience of Family-duties.

Use 1. SEEING it is a duty incumbent upon all parents, and masters of families, to be careful, that not only themselves, but also all under their charge, even their whole family, do faithfully

serve the Lord; then they are greatly to be reproved, who are neither careful to serve God themselves, neither take they any care of their families; but as there is no fear of God in their hearts, so neither is there any fear of God in their families. Yea, instead of God's service, there is all manner of wickedness and profaneness; so that their houses are as so many filthy cages of unclean birds, and so many sties of all manner of abominations: Of whose houses we may say what Solomon said of the *harlot's house*, Prov. vii. 27. 'tis the way to hell;' that is, the high and ready way unto eternal death and condemnation. These men howsoever they would be esteemed good masters and good governors, yet are they far from such, in that they neglect the main duty belonging to good governors; which is, to take care of the souls of those under their charge, and not willingly suffer all manner of wickedness, and profaneness, to rule and bear sway in their families, and that without any check or controul.

I dare boldly say, it were much better for a man to put his child into a pest-house than into such a family; in that wickedness is more infectious than the plague, spreading infinitely, polluting every one it comes near: and whereas the plague and pestilence can but kill the body, the contagion of sin is apt to destroy both body and soul; and therefore what is usually written upon the doors of such houses as are visited with the plague, (*Lord have mercy upon us*) may far better be written upon the doors of such houses, where, through the neglect of family-duties, sin and wickedness doth abound.

I know there are very many, both parents and masters, who, having provided for the bodies of those under their charge, think they have sufficiently discharged their duty towards them: but, I would demand of such, if their care be only to provide for the bodies of their children and servants, what do they more to them than to their *beasts?* If they only clothe them, and give them their wages, what do they more to them than the Turks and infidels (who know not God) do to their children and servants? if their care be only to provide for them an earthly inheritance, without any care to make them heirs of an heavenly inheritance, what do they more to them than Jews (who are ignorant of Christ and his gospel) do for their children?

Let such know, that it is their duty to provide not only for perishing carcases, but also for the immortal souls of all theirs. And, it is a vain and foolish imagination, for any to think they have done their duty, when they have apparelled, nourished, and brought up their children and servants to be wise, and rich, in this world, considering they have a far greater account to make before God, for their souls; of which, if any should perish through their negligence and unfaithfulness: How dreadful will that account be? Oh what answer will they be able to make, when the blood of their

children, and servants' souls, shall be required of them? Oh how doleful will the reckoning be? sure it will make the day of judgment a terrible day to many of them. When their children and servants shall upbraid their parents and masters, saying, 'Now alas, we must to the pit, and we have you to blame for it; your cursed example, and lamentable negligence, has brought us to the pit. We never saw you worship God in your closets, or in your families: Ye did not instruct us in the way of the Lord, nor train us up to it, and now we are indeed ruined and damned for our sins; but our blood lies at your doors, who might have done much to have saved us, but did it not.' And, on the other hand, how will the shrieks of parents fill every ear; saying, 'I have damned myself. I have damned my children, I have damned my servants: while I fed their bodies, and clothed their backs, I have ruined their souls, and brought double damnation on myself.' And now:

O man, hast thou a charge of souls to answer for, and dost thou not yet bestir thyself for them, that their blood be not found in thy skirts? Wilt thou do no more for immortal souls, than thou wilt do for thy beasts that perish? O miserable families without God in the world, that are without family-prayer. Oh! that all parents, masters, and governors, would seriously think and meditate on this fearful imprecation of the prophet Jeremiah, against all prayerless families, Jer. x. 25. that so they may dread the omission of so necessary a duty, as much as the scorching fire of hell; for what is hell itself, but the feeling of this wrath and fury of God?

CHAP. IV.

A second Use of reproof to such, who are only triflers in Family and Religious Duties.

Use 2. IS it so, that family and religious duties, are, and ought to be performed with all due care and diligence, as a duty commanded by the authority of God, Deut. vi. 7. 'Thou shalt teach my laws diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house,' &c. and Psalm cxix. 4. 'Thou hast commanded us to keep thy precepts diligently,' and Deut. iv. 9. 'Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons.' How greatly then are such to be reproved, who are only triflers in this matter?

I. Such as do it by halves and parts.

II. Such as do it in a coldrife, dead, and formal manner.

I. Such there are, as do it only by halves and parts, they will neither entirely omit, nor will they entirely perform: they will go a part of the way with God, but not the whole.

1. Some there are, who will, it may be, read a chapter or so; but neither prayer nor singing of praises to God in their families, altho' there is as much ground for the one, as for the other. Eph. vi. 18. where we are bid, 'Pray always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit.' And, we indeed ought to join prayer to reading, for the light of God's Spirit to understand what we read, as David, Psalm cxix. 18. 'Open mine eyes, that I may see the wonders out of thy law.' And, indeed, praise ought not to be forgot, and is ever looked on as *comely for the upright in heart.* Psal. xxxiii. 1. And to this purpose is that exhortation by the Psalmist, Psalm lxvii. 5. 'Let the people praise thee, O God: let all the people praise thee.' And then see what follows, ver. 6. 'Then shall the earth yield her increase: and God, even our God, shall bless us.' And Psalm cl. *ult.* 'Let every thing that hath breath, praise the Lord: praise ye the Lord.' And surely of all other creatures, men are most bound to praise God.

2. Others there are, who will, it may be, read, or sing, or so, but no prayer in their families, although there be full as much ground for prayer, as for the other duties of family religion: both from *the command of God*, and *our own necessities.* No less can be meant, when we are bid 'pray always with all prayer,' Eph. vi. 18. And, 1 Thess. v. 17. where we are bid, *pray without ceasing.* And, truly, if prayer be not joined with our reading, for the light of God's Spirit, that we may understand what we read, we can but expect little or no profit or advantage by it. For, 'naturally we understand not the things of the Spirit of God, neither can we know them; because they are spiritually discerned,' 1 Cor. ii. 14. And, our Saviour expressly tells us, John xv. 5. that *without me you can do nothing.* That is, 'without the aid, assistance, and direction of the Spirit, we can perform no duty in a right manner.' An apostle could say, 'we are not sufficient for one good thought, 2 Cor. iii. 5. but all our sufficiency is of God.'

And every duty, that it may be service done to God, must be done in the name of Christ; for, God will accept of no service, but what is offered on this altar, Col. iii. 17. And, 'whatsoever ye do in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus.' Yea, Christ is the only way, the truth and the life: And no man can come to the Father, but by him, John xiv. 6. 'Through him only the Jews and Gentiles have access unto the Father,' Eph. ii. 18.

3. Others there are, who will, it may be, perform family prayer and praise in the evening, and none in the morning, although there are full as much ground and reason for the one, as for the other: no less are commended unto us, by the morning and eve-

ning sacrifice under the law, which we find given in command to the Jews, Exod. xxix. 31, 38, 39. And how much greater reason have we now under the gospel, to offer up unto God the morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praises. And to the same purpose, is that of the Psalmist, Psalm xcii. 1, 2. 'It is a good thing to give thanks unto thy name, O most High: to shew forth thy loving kindness in the morning; and thy faithfulness every night.' Thus it is a duty, which ought to be performed daily by every family and person, according to their place and power, as fit occasion is offered, both morning and evening. For, the Lord's mercies, are new every morning, and so are both our sins, and our wants; and therefore, so ought our application to God be. This was the firm and steady resolution of the Psalmist, Psalm lv. 17. 'Evening and morning and at noon will I pray, and cry aloud: and he shall hear my voice.' And, Psalm lix. 16. 'But I will sing of thy power; yea, I will sing aloud of thy mercy in the morning,' &c.

4. Others there are, who very seldom worship God in their families; it may be, once in a week, as on the Sabbath-evening, a little of prayer or so; and no more until the next Lord's day. Although every day affords new grounds and reasons for it; both from the command of God, and our own necessities; which were already proved from scripture and example. Yea, I dare boldly say, that such as confine all their religion to the Sabbath, they do never keep the Sabbath duly. But alas, it is the practice of too many professing Christians in these days: But, in vain, do such profess the name of good Christians, who confine all their religion to the Sabbath, or to times of troubles and afflictions in their families; which, alas, is the practice of too many, who profess the Christian name.

Yea, all such who deal thus in family and religious duties, by cutting and carving, taking and leaving as they see meet, are undoubtedly trifiers; and are to be accounted contemners of the Lord's authority. For, assuredly if it were out of regard to the Lord's command, that made them careful of one part, the same would make them careful to perform all the other parts. For the whole commands of God is a chain of holy precepts; and if one link of a chain is broken, you may say, the whole chain is broken: Yea, the whole law of the Lord is knit together, and all the parts of it are subservient to each other: And, it is remarkably so with respect to family-religion. And surely, such as disjoin what the Lord hath joined together, they are faulty: yea, such lie under that heavy curse that is pronounced by the Prophet Jeremiah, Jer. xlviii. 10. 'Against such as do the work of the Lord deceitfully;' or *negligently*, as it is rendered in the margin.

II. Such as do it in a coldrife, dead, and formal manner: Yea, such there are who only make the fashion, at least, of attending

all the duties of religious worship, but, with such faintness, coldness and indifferency, as counting it rather a burden, than their choice and delight: Yea, they manage it as a hard task, or as they were asleep, taking no pleasure in it. They only please themselves with the mere performance of religious duties, without considering how they are performed: Yea, they can scarce tell what advantage they make of it. But, let such, I say, look with trembling into the state and condition of such lukewarm professors, Rev. iii. 16. 'So then, because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot; I will spue thee out of my mouth.' Yea, is it not from hence, that so many are only dwarfs and babes in grace, even from their coldness and indifferency in holy and religious duties?

Yea, some there are, who count the hours they spend in their families in religious duties, to be the longest hours of the day: hence, when duty is over, they are like men eased of a burden; yea, the Lord's day is the longest day of all the week with many; and therefore, they will sleep longer that morning, and go sooner to bed that night than ordinarily they do; for their heart say within them, 'When will the Sabbath be gone,' *&c.* Amos viii. 5. Thus they have no heart to the work, although the clear command is to be 'fervent in spirit, serving the Lord,' Rom. xii. 12. Yea, 'he is only a rewarder of them that *diligently* seek him,' Heb. xi. 6. And 'in keeping of God's commands, there is a great reward,' Psalm xix. 11. Yea, he is good to the soul that seeks him; and to them that wait for him, will 'he appear the second time without sin unto salvation,' Heb. ix. *ult.* But let such take heed, who thus offer the Lord a carcase, a form, and a shadow, without a substance: Let such, I say, look with trembling and astonishment, to that word of the Prophet Malachi, 'Cursed be the deceiver, that hath in his flock a male; and voweth and sacrificeth to the Lord a corrupt thing,' Mal. i. *ult.*

CHAP. V.

An Exhortation unto all Parents and Masters of Families, to make Conscience of Family and Religious Duties.

Use 3. LET the third Use be an use of exhortation, to stir up all Christian parents, and masters of families, to be careful, that their whole house do faithfully serve the Lord, as well as themselves; that they take up Joshua's resolution, *As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.* As you would not be guilty of the body and blood of your children, and servants' souls; and as you would not have them cry out against you in everlasting fire,

see that you bring them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord? And to this end:

Oh! let religion be in your families, not as a matter of small importance, only to be minded by the bye, or at leisure hours, when the world will give you leave; but let it be the tending business of the house. O let your houses be nurseries for the church of God. Yea, let it be said of your houses, as that of the Psalmist, Psalm lxxxvii. 5. *That this man and that man was born there.* And, if you would that your children should bless you, that your servants should bless you? Oh! then set up religion and piety in your families. And, as ever you would be blessed, or be a blessing to them; let your hearts and your houses be the temples of the living God, in which his worship may be duly performed.

Yea, every parent, master and governor, should be that in *the body politic of his own house*, which the Heart is in the *natural body of man;* as it communicateth life and vital spirits to the rest of the members: so must the master of the household endeavour to impart the spiritual life of grace, to all that are members of his body politic; and his house, by a constant conscionable performance of holy and religious duties there; and this would make it *a little church:* For, the maintaining the worship of God, makes every house to become *a sanctuary, an house of God.* Hence, divers pious governors in the New Testament, are said to have *churches* in their houses: as Philemon, verse 2. and 1 Cor. xvi. 19. Aquila and Priscilla, and Nimphas, Col. iv. 15. all whose *houses* were called *churches;* as in respect of the saints in their houses, so, in respect of the worship of God among them. Oh what an honour will this be to us, when, upon this account, our habitations shall be called rather *churches*, than *private houses! temples of God*, rather than the *dwellings of men!* But,

For the more profitable pressing of this Use; I shall shew you what be the *duties* and *services*, which are especially required of parents and masters of families, in reference to those under their charge.

CHAP. VI.

Of Family-Prayer, with quickening Motives thereunto.

PRAYER, which is the principal part of the service of God in all families, and therefore ought to be performed by the governors of them; who, as he is *king* to govern his family, so, a *priest* to offer up a morning and evening *sacrifice* of prayer and praise unto God, in and with his family. This we find commanded to us in the practice of the *patriarchs*, who, when they removed to

any place, they builded an altar, where God was to be called upon by the whole family. This did Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. David, though a king, yet prayed with his household, as their governor; for it is recorded of him, 2 Sam. vi. 18. that 'having offered burnt-offerings, and peace-offerings before the Lord, he returned *to bless his household*;' that is, say expositors, 'to bless God with his family; and beg God's blessing on them.'

In the New Testament, the apostle writing to masters of families concerning their duties, adjoineth this, *Continue in prayer*, Col. iv. 2. implying it to be one special duty incumbent on them, to be constant in *family-prayer*. Of Cornelius it is said, Acts x. 2. that 'he was one who feared God with all his house; which gave much alms to the people, and prayed to God always;' which implieth, that he prayed daily with his family. These examples are recorded by the Holy Ghost, as copies for us to write after.

But for your full conviction of that obligation, which lies upon you, for the performance of this duty; let the following arguments be duly weighed.

Argument 1. The first argument shall be drawn 'from that trust that is committed unto governors of families:' Here observe,

1. 'That governors of families are intrusted with the souls, and with the religion of their families;' not, that they may prescribe unto them, or impose upon them what way of religion they please; or, that inferiors may be excused, by the errors or neglect of the superiors; but, it is committed to their care; and they have received a charge from the Lord, to look diligently to all that are under them, that they duly worship God, observe his ordinances, and keep his statutes.

That there is such a care incumbent on them, is evident from what God himself commands under the law: the master of the family was, by the appointment of God, 'to look to the circumcising of all the males of his house, both those that were born in his house; and those that were bought with money.' In the fourth commandment, the master of the family is charged, not only to keep the Sabbath in his own person, but look to his family also. 'Thou shalt do no work therein;' that is not all, 'nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant,' &c. Exod. xx. 10. Suitable to this charge, is the care and holy resolution of Joshua in the text, 'I and my house will serve the Lord. Chuse ye whom ye will serve,' saith he to the rest of the people, 'I have not so much to do with that: But as for me and my house,' I must, and will look to that, 'we will serve the Lord.' Hence, this first thing appears that governors of families, are to take care of the religion; and therefore, of the souls of their families. When a child is brought forth, when a servant is brought into thine house, God says to thee, as the man in the Prophet's parable, 1 Kings xx. 39. *Keep this man*, Look to this child, look

to this servant, look to their souls, if they miscarry, or be lost through thy neglect: 'thy life shall go for their lives; and thy soul for their souls:' and so shall thy judgment be.

2. Governors of families have never faithfully discharged their trust, till they have used all means which God hath appointed, that may be for the advantage of the souls under their charge, and the furtherance of them in religion. If there be any thing you might have done that you have neglected, you are therein unfaithful.

3. Their joining in prayer with their families is according to God's appointment, and of great advantage to souls.

1. 'Joint prayer is, *an ordinance of God.*' Thus much is hinted clearly enough in that form of prayer which Christ taught his disciples which runs in the plural number, *Our Father,—Give us this day our daily bread;* and from the practice of the primitive Christians.

Now, if Christians in general, such as were not of the same family, are, by *God's appointment*, to join in prayer, then much more *Christians* of the same family. Conjunction in the same family-relation, cannot hinder or discharge from any part of Christian communion. Families, as well as greater assemblies, should not forget their *joint-prayers*.

2. 'Conjunction in prayer, as it is *God's ordinance*, so it is *of great advantage to souls.*' The joint-prayers of the several persons in a family, are more acceptable to God, and more prevalent with him, than the prayers of the same persons apart.

There is the same reason for the prevalency of the joint-prayers of Christians of the same family, as of the joint-prayers of Christians not of the same family, of the same city, or town, or county. Now we find in scripture, from the practice of the people of God, that this was their concurrent judgment, that their coming together to pray would prevail more with God than their praying apart, as Acts xii. 12. before mentioned, many were gathered together in *Mary's house praying for Peter.* If it had been all one, as to the probability of the success: if the Lord had been as likely to have been prevailed with for Peter's enlargement, by their *separate*, as by their *joint-prayers*, they would never have run that hazard as they did, by their coming together; they knew well enough what danger it would have been, had they been taken praying. Many instances might be brought of the like practice of Christians in all ages, who, especially in cases of great exigencies and necessities did thus assemble: whence is a clear foundation of this argument, 'That way of prayer which the people of God did chuse, and betake themselves to in cases of any special exigencies, that was, in their judgment, the most acceptable and prevailing.' But joint-prayer is such in the case of greater societies, and therefore also in the less.

Besides, joint-prayer will be of this advantage, 'it will be a great help to those that are less able to teach them to pray apart.' Governors should teach theirs to pray, as Christ taught his disciples. And how should they teach them? By instruction only. We may learn more of the skill and spirit of prayer, by a few instructions exemplified, than by multitudes of counsels alone. The nurse teaches the child to speak by speaking in its hearing. By this Christian practice we shall suggest matter of prayer to them, put words into their mouths, yea, kindle desires in their hearts. Who that hath any experience knows not, how our affectionate enlargements, and importunate pleadings, and wrestlings with God in prayer, do often warm and enlarge the hearts of those that join with us.

Argument 2. 'It is the will of God that Christians should take and improve all opportunities, advantages and occasions of prayer.' This proposition, if it need proof is sufficiently evident from 1 Tim. ii. 8. *I will that men pray every where: omnimodam precationem.* A Lapid: and Eph. vi. 18. *praying always with all prayer.* '*Always*,' or as it is in the Greek, *on every opportunity, with all prayer, with all manner of prayer;* in public, in private, in secret, alone, together, as opportunity is offered, and occasion requires. Now, have not governors of families, as such, special opportunities for joint-prayer? Their *cohabitation*, upon which they may meet more easily and frequently than those that live at a greater distance; their *authority*, by virtue whereof they may command the attendance of their families, puts opportunity into their hands.

And have they not also, as such, special occasions of joining in prayer? There are family-mercies which they are jointly concerned to pray for when wanted, and to acknowledge when received: There are family-afflictions and crosses, which they are in common concerned to pray against: There are family-sins, which call for joint-confessions and humiliations. Those that have sinned together, or suffer together, or are sharers in the same common mercies, ought also to join together in the same confessions, petitions, and thanksgivings.

Argument 3. 'From the example of Christ,' who not only taught his family to pray, but prayed with them. His disciples were his family. The passover was to be eaten by the several families apart, a lamb for a family. And if you would know who are Christ's family, enquire with whom he eat the passover, these are his disciples, and with these he prayed; 'As he was alone praying, his disciples were with him,' Luke ix. 18. But how was he *alone* when his disciples were with him? The meaning only is, he was withdrawn from the multitude; he and his disciples were privately together and with them he prays.

Now to sum up all together: if the *example of Christ* be obliging to his *followers;* if *governors of families* have *opportunities*

and *occasion* of joining in prayer with them; and it be the will of God that they take and improve all opportunities and occasions of praying: if *governors of families* be *intrusted* with the souls of their families, and this *trust* cannot be *discharged* where this exercise is *neglected*, then must it be acknowledged, 'that it is a duty incumbent on them from the Lord; and that they sin against God, who do make no conscience of it.'

To what hath been said, let me farther add these two things.

1. Consider the *manifold benefits* which usually follow and accompany this family-prayer.

1. 'It is a sanctifying ordinance;' thereby the *husband* is sanctified to the *wife*, and the *wife* to the *husband*, so that they prove blessings and comforts to each other. *Children* likewise are blessed and sanctified to their *parents*, and *servants* to their *masters*: yea, family-prayer produceth God's blessing upon their *callings* and *enjoyments*, upon their *losses* and *crosses*, both are thereby blessed and sanctified unto them.

2. 'Family-prayer, as it is a *sanctifying* ordinance, so it is a *seasoning* ordinance.' It seasons the whole house with the fear of God. It is recorded of Cornelius, that he was a 'devout man, one that feared God *with all his house*, who prayed to God *always*.' His constant course of praying with his family, questionless did season his whole house with the fear of God. As prayerless families are for the most part destitute of the fear of God; so in those families where a constant course of praying is kept up, there the hearts of many are seasoned with the fear of God. As Abraham was a *praying master*, so he had *praying servants*, Gen. xxiv. 11. for inferiors are very apt to write after the copy of their superiors, and to follow their example. Thus, by a praying master, children and servants are taught to pray.

3. 'Family prayer is a special preservative against common calamities;' Polanus in his Syntagm, relateth how in the year 1584 'there was such a terrible earthquake, that overthrew all the houses in a whole town in Switzerland, save one; wherein the master of the family was at the same time praying with his wife, children, and servants.' If God doth not preserve praying families from those common judgments and calamities, that befal others; yet, he will so sanctify these calamities unto them, that they shall turn to their good; according to that gracious promise, 'All things shall work together for good, to them that love God,' Rom. viii. 28. Let no business then whatsoever, occasion the omitting either of morning or evening prayer. For what business can be of greater importance, than *the serving of God*, upon whose blessing depends the good and ill success of all our affairs? How can that master expect a blessing from God upon his daily labours, who omits either morning or evening prayer? For as God is the *Foun-*

tain of all blessing, so, prayer is the *means* he hath sanctified for the *obtaining* of it.

Say not, thou art willing to pray with thy family, but knowest not how to express thyself in apt words.

As frequent use in other things, maketh men perfect therein, so, accustom thyself to pray in thy closet; and thereby thou wilt be enabled to pray with thy family. Rather than thou shouldest altogether forbear praying in and with thy family, out of a conceit of thy inability thereunto, I would advise thee for a while, to read a prayer out of a book, till thou hast a confidence to pray in thy family without one.

4. Consider the manifold mischiefs that usually follow and accompany the neglect of family-prayer. As,

1. 'Neglect of family-prayer, is usually accompanied with the neglect of all other religious duties;' which is found true by sad experience: For, whoever heard, that the scriptures were read, or catechising used in any family where prayer was omitted? So that, prayerless houses are as *sepulchres*, wherein all religion lies buried.

2. 'Neglect of family-prayer, exposeth the whole household to the wrath and fury of God;' as the prophet Jeremiah implieth, where he saith, 'Pour out thy fury upon the heathen that know thee not; and upon the families that call not upon thy name,' Jer. x. 25. where by the *fury of God*, is meant, 'his wrath in the *highest* degree, his anger boiled up to the height. Oh! who can abide this scalding wrath? And, by *pouring out God's fury*, is meant, God's inflicting his fierce wrath in the *greatest* measure, in the *highest* degree.' The words, though they are set down in form of a prayer, yet, they are a *prediction* (as well as a *petition*) of God's dreadful wrath and fury, to be undoubtedly inflicted upon all prayerless families. For, the Prophet put up this prayer unto God as foreseeing the certain ruin and destruction of such families as called not upon the name of the Lord: He knew that God would assuredly *pour out his fury* upon their families, who did not *pour out their souls* to him in prayer.

Oh then, in what a desperate danger are many families now-a-days in which there is *no* praying, or *very little?* it may be, once in a week, as on the Lord's day evening; which is the practice of too, too many professing Christians in these days; who make a profession of religion, yet, very seldom pray with their families, whose very practise doth condemn them; for, if *family-prayer* be not a duty incumbent upon them, Why do they perform it sometimes? if it be a duty, Why do they perform it so seldom? Surely for people not to practise, what they know to be their duty, must needs prove an aggravation, both of their sins and punishments.

Yet, alas, How is this duty little or not at all regarded by many? Oh how many prayerless families are there to be found in this na-

tion? who live, as if there were no God to serve, no soul to save, no hell to be feared, no heaven to be enjoyed. I cannot but much wonder, how such can eat and drink with delight? or, how they can lie down in peace, seeing they are liable every moment to the pouring forth of God's fierce wrath and fiery indignation, which they know not how suddenly may seize upon them? Well may that inscription be set upon their houses, which is usually put upon the houses visited with the plague, *Lord have mercy on us;* for, surely the plague of God is not far from them.

Oh think of this, all ye *parents* and *governors*, who make little or no conscience of praying in and with your families; consider it well, and lay it to heart: and thereupon resolve for the future, with the assistance of God's grace to set upon, and keep up a constant course of family worship: thus, shall you make your houses Bethels, houses of God, and little churches: Yea, thereby, you shall not only prevent God's fierce wrath and fury from falling upon yourselves and family; but likewise, procure God's favour, both towards yourselves and dear relations. In a word, to conclude this point, O ye parents and masters of families, as you would discharge your duty to God, and man, as you would employ your talents, improve your gifts, increase your graces, exalt the name of God, prove a blessing to your family; and at last give up your account with joy and comfort; I beseech every one of you, to take up Joshua's resolution, 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.'

CHAP. VII.

Of reading the holy Scriptures in Families, with quickening Motives thereunto.

II. ANOTHER duty incumbent upon parents and masters of families, is, 'frequently to read the holy scriptures, or cause them to be read in and with their families.' Though this be a different exercise from the former prayer, yet, they do mutually help one another; and therefore are fit to be joined together.

We read how the priests under the law, were daily to light the lamps, and to burn incense, Exod. xxx. 7, 8. As the lamp signified the word of God, so, the incense signified prayer. And, as the lamp was daily to be lighted, and the incense daily to be burned; so, we are thereby taught daily to join the word and prayer together: for, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Tim. iv. 5. 'By the word and prayer, every thing is sanctified.' Yea, this duty of reading the word, we find given in command unto householders under the law; for, saith the Lord, 'Ye shall lay up my words,'

(meaning the words of the law) 'in your heart, and in your soul. And yet shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up:' which implieth, a diligent reading of the word in their houses. Yea, the old people of the Jews, were so diligent in teaching their children the word of God, that Zosephus saith, Every one of our people being asked concerning the laws, rehearseth them more easily than his own name.

In the New Testament, we have the apostle's command for this duty; for, saith he, 'Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,' Col. iii. 16. The word is sometimes taken for Christ himself, John i. 1. and so it is true, that 'we should labour, that the word of Christ should dwell in us.' But, by the word of Christ, is here meant, the written word of God, which is here called the word of Christ, both because he is the *author* of it, and because he is the *chief subject* of it. And, whereas, the apostle saith, Let the word of Christ dwell in you:' it is a metaphor taken from such as dwell under one and the same roof with us; and noteth two things:

I. That we must get it unto our hearts and houses, as well as into our churches.

II. That by our frequent reading of it, and causing it to be read in our houses, it should be as familiar with us, as one that dwells with us under the same roof.

For the better pressing of this duty upon the consciences of parents and masters of families; I shall hint only two motives, to quicken you up hereunto.

1. The knowledge of the scriptures, will be an excellent means, to keep up your authority in your families over your children and servants: For, therein, they cannot but hear and understand it is their duty, to be obedient to you in all things: Your own commands and threatenings, may perhaps cause them to serve you with *eye-service as men-pleasers:* but, to hear the commands and threatenings of God in his word, may cause them to serve you in *singleness of heart.* So that, if nothing else, yet policy, methinks, should prevail with you, to cause the word of God to be read frequently in your houses.

2. Some by reading the scriptures, others by hearing it read in the family, have been converted from the state of nature, to the state of grace.

For faith may be wrought in us, by hearing the word read, as well as by hearing it preached: St. Augustin reports of an Egyptian Monk, who lived in a Christian family where the word of God was frequently read, was thereby converted to the Christian faith. *August. Prolog. Lib.* 1. *de doctrina Christi.*

Mr. Thomas Bilney, a martyr, was thus converted; having heard the speech of Jesus, saith he, even then when the New Testament was translated by Erasmus, understanding it to be ele-

quently done ; I bought it, being allured thereto, rather by the elegancy of the *Latin*, than the word of God, (for at that time I knew not what it meant) and looking into it, by God's special providence, I met with these words of the apostle St. Paul, 1 Tim. i. 15. 'This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners ; of whom I am chief.' Oh ! most sweet and comfortable sentence to my soul ! this one sentence, through God's instruction and inward working, did so exhilerate my heart, which before was wounded through the guilt of my sins ; and being almost in despair, that immediately I found marvellous comfort and quietness in my soul ; so that my bruised bones did leap for joy. After this, the scripture began to be more sweet unto me, *than honey and the honey-comb*, &c.

And, indeed, there is a greater virtue in the holy scriptures, than in any other book, for the working of conversion in the hearts of natural men and women. Oh ! what an encouragement should this be unto parents and masters of families, to cause the holy scriptures to be frequently read in their houses ! for, what know they, whether some under their charge may not be thereby converted ? Oh that every one of us were ambitious of that commendation which Eusebius gives of St. Origen, that he could repeat all the scriptures at his fingers' ends, *Histor. Eccles. lib.* 6. *cap.* 2.

And that your reading may be the more profitable, observe these few directions :

1. Before you read, 'lift up your heart unto God in some short prayer, besecching him, who is the Father of light, to enlighten the blind eyes of your understandings ;' that you may understand what you read, to strengthen your memories, that you may remember it ; and that he would give you wisdom to apply, faith to believe, and grace to practise what you read.

Which prayer is necessary before reading, because, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. ii. 14. 'Naturally we understand not the things of the Spirit of God ; neither can we know them, because they are spiritually discerned.' And it is only the Spirit of God that revealeth them unto us ; which we have no hope to attain, but by fervent prayer.

2. The word must be read and heard 'with all holy reverence and attention,' as being the word of the great God, whereby he revealeth himself and his will clearly unto us, for the building us up in all grace and godliness.

3. In reading, 'every one ought to take special care of such passages, as are either more weighty in themselves, or proper to them,' for their particular cases, use, and occasion.

4. In reading or hearing any portion of scripture, 'let every one apply it to himself, as spoken to him.' By this means, may every one be much edified by every part of the word of God.

CHAP. VIII.

Of Family-Catechising, with quickening Motives thereunto.

III. 'ANOTHER duty incumbent upon parents and masters of families, in reference to those under their charge, is, 'to instruct them in the principles of religion, in a catechistical way:' For, to catechise, is to teach the first principles of Christian religion, whereby they who are young, may be acquainted with God betimes.

This we find given in command unto householders under the law; for, saith the Lord, Deut. vi. 6, 7. 'These words which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart; and thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children; and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thy house; and when thou walkest by the way; and when thou risest up:' Where, by children are not meant only natural children, but likewise servants: it being usual with the Hebrews, by *children*, to understand all under subjection. We have a prophecy, that there shall be, as it were, a succession of Christ's name from generation to generation, Psalm lxxii. 17. 'His name shall endure for ever: his name shall be continued as long as the sun:' or, as the phrase imports, 'His name shall pass from father to son.' Every father then, must by Christian instruction, declare the name of Christ to his son, that so the name of Christ may pass from father to son, from generation to generation; which prophecy concerns the time of the gospel, Eph. vi. 4. Parents are commanded to bring up their children in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord;* or to nurture them up in instruction, as the word in the Greek properly signifieth.

This duty is commended to us by the example of godly householders in all ages, 'I know, saith God of Abraham, that he will command his children, and his household after him, to keep the way of the Lord,' Gen. xviii. 19. We likewise find David often instructing his son Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

And that this was the practice of the saints, in the time of the gospel, appeareth from the expressions of the apostle, Heb. v. 12. and Heb. vi. 1. 'Ye have need that one teach you again, which be the first principles of the doctrine of Christ;' which imply, a Form of Catechism, which was used by the Christians in those days. And Oh, that all Christian parents and governors of families in our days, would make conscience of instructing and teaching their children and servants in the principles of religion, out of some good catechism, observing these two *caveats:*

1. 'That this duty be done frequently,' on some day or days, every week.

2. 'That it be by little at once,' for to be too long, or tedious

therein, is apt to dull the understanding; and to cause weariness in the learner.

For the better pressing this duty; I shall add a few *motives* or *arguments*:

I. The first Motive or Argument, may be taken from the express command of God, Deut. vi. 7, 8, 9. where we are commanded to talk of the law within the house, to teach it to our children diligently: or, as the word is in the *margin* 'to whet it on them by catechising; and to write it on the posts of their doors, and on the walls of the house.' And will any think, that the walls should teach, and the parent and master be silent. Yea, the vows of God are upon you to this matter, you were solemnly sworn, when ye offered your children to the Lord in baptism. And how can you bear the reproach of perjury, a breach of solemn vows to the Lord?

II. The second Argument or Motive, may be taken from the *benefits* which will follow thereupon:

1. Timely instruction will season their hearts, that they are like to be better for it all the days of their lives: and therefore, saith the wise man, Prov. xxii. 6. 'Train up,' (or as the word signifieth, *catechise*) 'a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it;' but, as a vessel will retain long the savour of that liquor it was seasoned first withal; so, will men the instructions they have learned in their youth.

2. It is an excellent means, to keep them from the errors and heresies of the times; for, children well catechised and instructed in the principles of religion, are in a great measure antidoted against the danger of seducing doctrines. The apostle saith, 1 Cor. xi. 19. *There must be heresies;* which are of a spreading nature; and therefore, by our Saviour, compared to *leaven*, Mat. xvi. 6.

What better preservative against the infections of false doctrines, error, and heresies, than to be well catechised? Observe who they be, that are easiest seduced by false teachers; who they are, that have embraced their erroneous tenets: and you shall find, that they were such, who were never well catechised, nor grounded in the principles of religion. As therefore, you would not have your children and servants poisoned with the erroneous doctrines of false teachers; do your endeavours to get them rooted and grounded in the knowledge of truth.

3. It is an excellent means to make them hear the public ministry of the word with more profit; for, thereby, they will be enabled to examine the doctrines which they hear, by the analogy of faith. It is foretold, that in the latter days, 'there shall be false teachers, who shall privily bring in damnable heresies,' 2 Pet. ii. 1. And, therefore, we are not to receive all for truth, which is delivered in the pulpit; but, as the apostle exhorteth us, 1 Thess. v. 21. 'To prove and try all things; and to hold fast

only that which is good:' which we shall never be able to do, unless we be first well catechised, and instructed in the principles of religion; as also, well acquainted with the scriptures.

If, therefore, ye, who are parents and masters of families, would discharge your duty herein, How would errors vanish? religion flourish? And, how would knowledge and grace abound in your children and servants? Yea, parents and masters, by teaching their children and servants piety, are an especial means of propagating true religion from age to age, and from generation to generation: no better means can be thought of. For, if all parents and masters were careful of their duty in this kind, as there is a succession of children, and thereby a preservation of mankind; so, there would be a succession of those that fear God, and thereby a preservation of true religion. Surely, nothing can more settle and comfort the heart of a wise parent on his death-bed, concerning his children, than assurance, that piety and religion is planted in them: for then, may he with stronger confidence, commend them to God's providence; and, with greater assurance, expect his blessing upon them after his death. It was a saying of a godly man, when a-dying, to his children, That none of them should dare think to meet him at God's tribunal in an unregenerate estate: considering what he had told them, in his life-time.

III. Another argument may be taken from the manifold damages which usually follow a neglect of family catechising.

1. 'It is the ground of that ignorance, and spiritual blindness, which overfloweth the nation:' for, as darkness proceedeth from the want of light; so, ignorance must needs proceed from the want of teaching.

2. 'It is the ground of that looseness and profaneness, that is in many families:' for, where God's service hath no place, there sin will be sure to have free place: where the *light of knowledge* is not set up by catechising, there the *deeds of darkness* will be sure to break forth: where there is no speaking to God by prayer, nor speaking of God by catechising, you may be sure, there will be speaking against God, and all the ways of holiness.

3. 'It is the ground of that barrenness, and unfruitfulness, under the means of grace, that is to be found amongst many in these days:' for, were children and servants better catechised, they would better understand the mysteries of the gospel, and much more by the ministry of the word, than they do. It is found by experience, that the most intelligent, and best practised hearers, are such as have been well catechised and instructed. The seed which thou thus timely sowest, will spring up to a plentiful harvest.

4. 'Such parents and masters as neglect this duty, do what in them lies, to damn their children and servants, as well as themselves:' for, how can it be expected, but that those children and

servants, who, through want of the light of knowledge, walk in darkness, should unavoidably stumble into hell? Oh that so many parents and masters should be so cruel, and unnatural to their children and servants, as to neglect this duty! the blood of souls is upon you.

Obj. Against this so necessary a duty, some are apt to object and say, 'To what purpose should we catechise our children; considering, that through the tenderness of their years, they are not capable of the mysteries of salvation.'

Ans. 1. Though children are not so capable of apprehending clearly the mysteries of salvation, as they will be afterwards; yet, none can deny them to understand so much, as to be capable of the seeds of grace, which daily experience confirmeth.

2. It is to be found by sad experience, that children uncatechised, as they grow in years, so they grow in sin and wickedness; whereby they become more backward and untoward to the learning any thing that is good, yea, and opposite thereunto. If you do not, the devil will catechise them betimes; and of him they will quickly learn: Oh prevent as much as may be, that enemy's sowing his tares, be before-hand with him, take the first season to cast your seed, the first season is the fittest season.

Obj. 'Should we constantly observe these religious exercises in our families, which you thus press upon us, we should hinder our servants' work, and thereby hazard our estates; and so shew ourselves worse than infidels.'

Ans. 1. This is a mere delusion of Satan, to keep you from the discharge of your duty: for, know assuredly, that the time spent in religious exercises with your family, is so far from hindering your servants' work, that it will rather further it, and bring such a blessing upon it, that shall return upon yourselves: for, profit and increase is the gift of God, who will give it to such as fear him, and observe his commandments. Oh then, say not of family-duties, as Judas did of that ointment, which Mary poured on our Saviour's feet, *Why is this waste?* Think not time waste and lost, which is spent in the service of God, and in the performance of the duties of your places and relations.

2. A wilful neglect of family-duties, is like to bring the curse of God upon your estates; yea, upon yourselves and all that belong unto you. Read what Moses saith in Deut. xxviii. 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20.

3. Who can produce the man, that did really suffer in his estate, by the loss of that time which he spent with, and for God? Surely, as the whetting of the scythe is no hinderance, but rather a furtherance of the workman; so, the exercises of religion can be no hinderance to your family affairs, but rather a great furtherance; unless you think this an hinderance, to stay to take God's

blessing with you ; without which, what are all your own and servants' pains, but vain and fruitless ?

4. Suppose you should suffer somewhat in your estate, by the loss of that time which you spend upon religion, you will have no cause to repent thereof: for, whilst others with Martha, 'are careful and troubled about worldly things : thou with Mary, hast chosen the better part :' Thou hast lost a little of thy temporals, to gain spirituals and eternals for thyself and thine : How foolish are those men, who prefer temporals before their eternals ; and will advance their estates upon the ruin of their souls ? I know, masters are apt to reply, that this is the minister's work, who hath properly *curam animarum*, 'the charge of souls committed to him ;' and that, if he do not warn all under his charge, of their sin and misery, their blood will be required at his hands. But, let all governors of families know, that they likewise have the charge of the souls of their children and servants committed unto them ; and if any of them perish through the neglect of their duty, their blood will be required at their hands. Oh that all parents and masters of families would be more faithful to that trust which God hath committed to them ; and henceforward resolve, through the assistance of God's grace, to set upon these duties, and not to neglect them any longer.

CHAP. XI.

Of Sabbath Sanctification in Families.

IV. ANOTHER duty incumbent upon parents, masters, and governors of families, is, 'To look to the sanctification of the Lord's day, to see, that the Christian Sabbath be sanctified, as by themselves ; so, by their whole family, even by all under their charge :' This is expressly enjoined in the fourth commandment ; which is directed not so much to children and servants, as to parents and masters of families, who are there commanded, not only in their own persons to keep holy the Sabbath day ; but, to see that their children and servants do it also : for thus the commandment runs, Exod. xx. 10. 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God ; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant :' which phrase (as Zanchy well noteth) implieth, 'That it is the duty of parents, and masters of families, to see, that their children and servants do not any way profane the Sabbath day ; but, that they kept it as a holy rest,' *Zanch.* in 4. *Præceptum.*

The sanctification of the Sabbath consists :

I. 'In a resting upon the day.'

II. 'In a consecrating that rest to the worship and service of God.'

Therefore, it is the duty of all parents, and masters of families, to take care, that both themselves, and all under their charge, do keep it:

1. 'As a day of rest.'

2. 'As an holy rest.'

1. 'As a day of rest;' resting in special from all the works of their ordinary calling. The very name *Sabbath*, (which in Hebrew signifieth *rest*) and the express prohibition in the fourth commandment, *of doing any work on that day*, do shew, that it is *a day of rest.*

How blame-worthy then are some masters, who, contrary to the express command of God, do set their servants about the ordinary works of their calling on the *Lord's day:* Let such know, that what is got by their servants' work on that day, is but the *gain of wickedness;* which will prove their loss at last.

2. It is the duty of masters to take care, that their families keep the Lord's day as an *holy rest*, by consecrating that time, which they set apart from their worldly business, to the worship and service of God, in the duties belonging to such an holy day: for, the Sabbath was not simply ordained, that we and our servants should rest from bodily labour; but, that we should in a special manner worship God on that day; so much is implied both in the first and last words of the fourth commandment: in the beginning it is said, *Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy;* and in the close it is added, *The Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it;* that is, sanctified it, and set it apart, to be wholly consecrated to him, and to his worship and service.

That parents and masters of families, may the better discharge their duty herein, observe these directions:

1. Look that your children and servants go with you to the ministry of the word; and let none be left behind, without necessary and urgent occasion; it being the ordinary means God hath sanctified for the reforming of their lives, and saving of their souls. When Jacob went to Bethel to worship, *he took his whole household with him*, Gen. xxxv. 2, 3. When Elkanah went up to offer to the Lord his sacrifice, *all his house went with him*, 1 Sam. i. 21. In like manner, do thou carry thy household with thee to the house of God.

2. After the public ordinances, be careful to call together all under thy charge; and let there be a repetition of sermons preached, either by thyself, or some one of thy family who can write best; and then examine them one after another, what they remember of the sermons they have heard, labouring to make them plain unto them, and to apply them also. Thus did our blessed Saviour with his beloved disciples, for, after his preach-

ing, when he was come home he said unto them, *Have ye understood all these things, which ye have heard?* And Mark saith, *When they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples:* whereupon one observeth, 'That Christ by his example doth instruct every master of a family how to carry himself in reference to those under his charge on the Lord's days, after their departure from the public congregation.'

And truly much good will thereby redound, as unto yourselves, so likewise unto all under your charge. For,

1. It will make them give better attention unto the ministry of the word, when they know they shall be called to an account, and examined what they have heard.

2. It would much help and confirm, as yourselves, so your children and servants in the understanding and believing of what hath been delivered publicly by the minister, if you would repeat and search the proofs of scripture, which were brought for the confirmation of the doctrine.

III. Another duty to be performed in and with your families, for the better sanctifying of the Lord's day, is singing of psalms; which as it was much practised by the saints and people of God of old under the law, so it is both a lawful and meet thing to be used by Christians now under the gospel, and that as publicly in the church, so privately in the family.

1. We find that it was an ancient custom of the people of God to sing psalms in their families, according to that of the Psalmist, Psal. cxviii. 15. *The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacle of the righteous.* That is, in the dwelling-places and houses of good men.

2. We have our Saviour herein for a pattern, of whom it is recorded, that after the eating of the passover, which was in a private house, he sung a psalm with his family, Mat. xxvi. 30.

IV. Another duty to be performed in and with your family, for the better sanctifying of the Lord's day, is reading some part of the holy scriptures, whereof before chap. 7. as also some good sermon or treatise of practical truths.

V. Another duty is family-prayer, whereof before, chap. 6.

VI. Another is catechising those under your charge, whereof see chap. 8. A conscionable performance of these will exceedingly help forward the sanctification of the Lord's day, and that without tediousness.

VII. Another duty incumbent on parents and masters is *godly conference*, conferring before your children and servants about some good and profitable matter, especially of the sermons you have heard: The counsel which the apostle giveth concerning our words and discourses, Eph. iv. 29. as it ought to be carefully observed and followed by us at all times, so especially on the Lord's day: 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouths, but that which is good to the use of edifying;' that is,

to the winning of them who are not converted, or to the further building up of those who are already converted.

And the prophet Isaiah, chap. lviii. 13. forbiddeth the *speaking our own words on the Sabbath day;* that is, all discourses which are merely worldly, and about earthly things, more than charity and necessity requireth; under which prohibition of not speaking our own words, is implied a direction to speak the *words of God*, or those things which tend to the honour of God and the spiritual good of others. Thus you will not only keep the sabbath day, as a day of rest, but likewise sanctify that rest.

For thine encouragement thereunto, know and consider that thy godliness depends much upon thy sanctifying the sabbath-day. As thou art strict or loose in the observation of that day, and the duties thereof, so doth thy godliness encrease or decrease.

VIII. That you may the better discharge your duty in looking to the sanctification of the Lord's day; be sure you suffer none under your roof to spend any part thereof either in idleness or in sports and pastimes.

1. Not in idleness, it being not a day of idleness, but of spiritual action.

2. Not in sports and pastimes, especially such as tend to carnal and sensual delights; for the Lord hath forbidden every man 'the following his own pleasures on his holy day,' Isa. lviii. 13. And the truth is, sports and pastimes are greater impediments to the worship and service of God than the ordinary works of our calling, in that they do more subtilly steal away the heart from holy duties than those do; whereupon St. Austin thought it better to plough on the Lord's day, than to dance and sport. *Quanto melius est arare, quam saltare in sabbato?* Aug. in Enarrationem Tituli Psalm xci.

Obj. Some object and plead the hard labour their servants have undergone the week before, and thence think they may be allowed a little recreation on the Lord's day.

Ans. 1. The rest on the Lord's day is the best and fittest recreation for the refreshing of their bodies, who have been tired with labour the six days before; and if they be spiritually minded, the best and fittest recreation for the refreshing of their souls, is singing of psalms, the perusing their spiritual evidences for heaven, the solacing themselves in the meditation of Christ, of what he hath done and suffered for them, holy conference and the like.

2. If you think bodily recreation necessary for your servants' health, why do you not rather allow them some part of your time on the week days, than to rob God of any part of his day, which he hath wholly appropriated to the duties of his worship and service. Whereas the Lord might have reserved six days for himself and allowed but one unto us, he hath dealt so bountifully, and graciously with us, as to reserve but one day to himself, and leave six for our business. And shall we be so ungrateful as to encroach

upon it, and sacrilegiously steal away some part of that small time, which he hath reserved to himself, for our servants' recreation?

CHAP. X.

Of Exemplary Lives in Parents and Masters of Families.

V. ANOTHER duty incumbent on parents and masters of families, is, To shew themselves parents of piety, and godliness, unto their children and servants, by an holy righteous conversation; that they may say unto them as Gideon did to his followers, *Look on me, and do likewise.* This we find practised by Abraham, of whom God himself giveth this testimony, Gen. xviii. 19. 'I know Abraham that he will command his children, and household after him to keep the way of the Lord:' whereby is implied, that Abraham would go before his household in keeping the way of the Lord, and they would follow after him. And Joshua testifieth as much of himself, Josh. xxiv. 15. 'As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;' He would be a pattern of piety and godliness unto his household, and they should follow his example: And David likewise resolveth as much for himself, for saith he, Psal. ci. 2. 'I will walk in my house with a perfect heart,' intending to become a pattern of piety and godliness to his household by an holy and righteous conversation.

The better to quicken up parents and masters of families hereunto, I shall produce a few arguments and motives.

1. Your lives are looked upon as precedents, your examples as rules, by your children and servants, and therefore you ought to be exemplarily holy and religious: what the wise man saith of one sin in a ruler, 'If a ruler hearken to lies all his servants are wicked,' is true in other sins; if a ruler or master of a family be a *swearer*, a *drunkard*, a *sabbath-breaker*, or the like, his servants are so too, or will quickly become such; for patterns are very prevalent both to vice and virtue, especially the patterns of superiors; inferiors are very apt to follow the examples of superiors, and to tread in their steps. How ordinary is it for wicked parents to have bad children, and profane masters to have wicked servants? And no marvel, seeing children and servants are apt to follow the evil example of their parents and masters, and to write after their copy. How careful then should parents and masters of families be of their lives and conversations, that they may be holy and righteous, and not loose and scandalous, lest their children and servants should follow after them to hell?

2. Your holy and righteous lives will draw honour and reverence from your children and servants; for the image of God,

which consisteth in true holiness and righteousness, carrieth such a majesty in it, that it commandeth honour and reverence from others: If therefore ye who are parents and masters, will with 'David walk within your houses with perfect hearts,' shewing yourselves patterns of piety and godliness, your children and servants cannot but honour and respect you, 'for them that honour me, saith God, I will honour,' 1 Sam. ii. 30. That is, I will make them to be held in honourable esteem by others. I grant indeed some are thereby despised, because they walk holily and unblameably: yet such, as they are truly honorable in themselves, so are they honorable in the eyes and esteem of many others. For, there is more true worth in the least grace, than in all earthly glory. 'Since thou wast precious in my sight thou hast been honorable,' saith God of his despised people, Isa. xliii. 4. Such parents therefore and masters of families, as by their godly lives and conversations are precious in the sight of God, they shall be honored by their children and servants. But on the other side, such parents and masters of families, as by their wicked lives and ungodly conversations are vile in the sight of God, they shall be despised, and lightly esteemed by their children and servants. For if children and servants perceive their parents and masters to be *liars*, *swearers*, *drunkards*, *sabbath-breakers*, and the like, How can they honor and respect them? That which is said of Jerusalem, Lam. i. 8. 'All that honored her, despised her, because they had seen her nakedness.' may be applied to wicked and profane parents and masters of families; their children and their servants who should most have honored them, cannot but despise them, because they have seen their wickedness: And this questionless is one special reason why most parents and masters have so little reverence and honor from their children and servants.

3. Such is the infectious property of sin, that if a parent or master of a family be a swearer, drunkard, scoffer at religion, &c. he is like by a contagious insinuation and evil example, to infect his whole family, even his own children and servants. And therefore sin is not unfitly resembled to the *leprosy*, which quickly overspreadeth the whole house. And it is observable that the more public the persons are, the more dangerous are their sins. Private men's sins are but like the errors of a *pocket-watch*, which usually misleads only the keeper of it; but the sins of a master of a family are like the errors of an *house-clock*, which is apt to mislead the whole family. O how careful then ought parents and masters of families to be of their lives and conversations, lest by their evil example they corrupt and poison their own children and servants.

4. What will it avail parents and masters of families to teach their children and servants the fear of God, to walk in his ways, when they themselves manifest little fear of God in their lives and conversations, but contrariwise are loose and wanton, wicked and

profane. For certainly, as good examples are the life of instruction, to make it profitable and effectual; so evil examples are the death and bane of good instruction to make it unprofitable and ineffectual. That parent, therefore, or master who reproveth sin in his child and servant, must be free from that sin himself, otherwise it will be said, 'Thou hypocrite cast the beam out of thine own eye, and then thou shalt see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.' Yea, and he must be free from all other scandalous sins, otherwise the child may say, 'my father reproveth me for lying, but he himself will swear.' And the servants may say, my master reproveth me for drunkenness, and he himself is covetous. That, therefore, thy family-reproof and admonition may be profitable, thou must be sure to be, at least unblameable in thy life and conversation, that thou mayest not be guilty of that sin which thou condemnest in thy child or servant; for thereby thou wilt pass a sentence of death and condemnation upon thy own soul.

THE

YOUNG MAN's GUIDE,

Through the Wilderness of this World, to the Heavenly Canaan.

Shewing him, how to carry himself Christian-like, in the whole Course of his Life.

The Epistle Dedicatory, to the Youth of England and Wales.

THOUGH I fear you are not all of you in so good a condition for your souls; as that I may apply these words to you without exception, which are in 1 John ii. 14. 'I have written unto you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one:' Yet, the searcher of hearts knoweth, that I have written this *Preface*, and the ensuing *Treatise* to you, out of an earnest desire, that it might be so with you.

Myself, and others, that stand upon the *brink of eternity*, by reason of age, can see better than yourselves (because we have had experience of it) that your youthful time is a dangerous time: wherein however ye may now rejoice, yet, if you take not heed, you may contract such guilt to your souls, as may make you to mourn hereafter, yea, for ever, Prov. v. 11, 12, 13.

You are apt to put off convictions, and the calls of grace, in hope of longer life; and so to be unwilling yet to repent, because you are too confident that yet you shall not die; as if holiness were not a thing in season for such as you are.

But doth God put off doing good to you till you are old? Is *He* not *now* preserving of you, and providing for you while you are young? Why then will you put off the doing service to *him* until you are old? What horrible unthankfulness is this to *God?* What ground have you to think that you shall live so long? Or, that you shall, without fail, die God's servants, if you live slaves to sin and Satan?

But, because I intend to be brief in the way of an *epistle* (for the porch must not be too great, where the house itself is but little) therefore I will say somewhat briefly to you, as may be considered under a twofold distinction; than to you *all* in general.

1. Some of you are the *children of godly parents*, others are not.

2. Some of you are yet in your apprenticeships and service; and with others of you, that time is expired.

You that are the *children of godly parents*, Oh if you should not

be *good*, what can you have to plead for yourselves? I take it for granted, that you have had the advantages of your parents' gracious instructions, holy examples, and fervent prayers. Have you forgotten what charge they laid upon you to fear the Lord? Much like to that of David to Solomon, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 'And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind; for the Lord searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts: If thou seek him, he will be found of thee: But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.'

Why will you let the pains, the prayers, the tears, the desires, the hopes of your fathers that begot you, and your mothers that bare you, be lost and frustrated? If your parents be yet alive, would it not be the *joy of their hearts, to see that GOD had circumcised your's?* And if they be dead, will not you be afraid to meet them at the tribunal of Jesus Christ, in an unregenerate condition? It was no small mercy to you, that God should make you to be the *seed of the righteous;* and it will be no small aggravation of your sin, if you should not be *righteous seed.* Perhaps, besides your immediate parents, your forefathers and ancestors were such as walked with God in their several generations; and so *godliness has (through free grace) been, as it were, entailed upon your house, from one age to another.* Now, what a dreadful thing would it be, if any of you should cut off the entail of godliness! Or, that you should go to hell, whose parents are going, or gone to heaven.

As for you whose parents are not godly, that must not keep you from labouring to be so, because they are not such, yet they should be such.

And as I said before, to those whose parents were gracious, that it would be a dreadful thing for them to cut off the entail of godliness; so now I say to you whose parents are wicked, that it would be a blessed thing for you to cut off the entail of sin; which, if you shall do, will also cut off the entail of those judgments which otherwise might come upon you, for your father's iniquities. Read to this purpose, Ezek. xviii. 14, 15, 16, 17. And oh! what an honor will this be to you, if you shall do that which is right in the sight of the Lord, when those out of whose bowels you came, did that which was evil! Mark what notice is taken by way of commendation, of young Abijah, the son of wicked Jeroboam, because 'in him was found some good thing towards the Lord God of Israel, in the house of Jeroboam,' 1 Kings xiv. 3. It is matter of great thankfulness and rejoicing to any beholder, that good children should come even out of a good family: But that branches should be holy, where the root was not, is matter of great admiration and praise. And yet, such wonderful mercy doth the Lord sometimes shew to some children, who neither by the father's nor mother's side can plead a right to the *covenant of grace.* Be not discouraged.

therefore, from looking after the promise, because you are not, according to the natural birth, *the seed of true believers:* but repent and believe the gospel; and then, instead of that (and which is more than that) you will, according to the *spiritual birth*, be the *sons of Abraham*, yea, *the sons of God.*

Now, in order to the second distinction: Some of you are yet in your apprenticeship and service, in which you ought to behave yourselves with that obedience to your governors, with that diligence and faithfulness in the duties of your places, that you may be blessings to the families into which God by his providence hath called you. Take heed of *pride*, *stubbornness*, *idleness*, *evil company*, and *of wronging your masters in the least kind.* Be much in the *consideration* and *imitation of Jacob and Joseph;* the first of which served Laban with all his power, Gen. xxxi. 6. and the other was so careful and conscientious to his master's business, that he made him overseer of his house, and put all that he had into his hands, Gen. xxxix. 4.

I would advise you to get such scriptures by heart, which instruct servants in their duties, especially these; Eph. vi. 5, 6. 7. Col. iii. 22, 23, 24, 25. 1 Tim. vi. 12. Tit. ii. 5. 10. 1 Pet. ii. 18, 19. &c. Take your Bibles, and turn to these places; read, remember, and practise them.

And, because there is a sort of wicked young ones, who not being content with being vile themselves, do desire to draw others into the fellowship of their works of darkness; therefore, let not that word depart from you, in Prov. i. 10. 'My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not;' and verse 15. 'My son, walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy foot from their path.' See also Prov. iv. 15, &c.

And now, for you young men, whose years of apprenticeship are expired, and who are no longer servants, because you are freed from your masters: You have a wide world before you, take heed that you be not lost in it, by wandering from the paths of God's commandments; either,

1. In abusing your liberty: Or,
2. In the using of your trades.

As for your *liberty;* Remember, that though the yoke of your masters be off, yet, you must take it upon you, if yet you have not. As you have a master upon earth, whose servants you were to be for a certain time, so, you have a Master in heaven, whose servants you must be for ever; and this will be no unwelcome news to you, if you do but understand what a good Master the Lord is to all that serve him in sincerity, and with all their heart. Though therefore, you have obtained freedom from man, yet you must not take any freedom to sin against God: And, though you are in that respect at your own disposal, yet, you must not live as if you were your own. I think that young men, at the coming

out of their time, had need count it one of the special time of their life, wherein they should be most watchful; for, it may be easily observed in too many, that there is such profaneness manifested, as if hell were broke loose.

In the using of your trades and callings, you must manage all things, as those that do not make men's practices, but God's precepts, the rule of their buying and selling. Beware of the love of *money*, which is *the root of all evil;* and be sure, go not out of God's way to get an estate: *That will be sad gain at last, which brings the loss of the soul.* It is *men's* horrible unbelief and ignorance, and distrustfulness of God's all sufficiency, that makes them think they shall not get enough for themselves and theirs to live comfortably upon, unless they should stretch their consciences beyond the due bounds. And know, 'That what is unjustly gotten, will be followed with a blasting, when that which is honestly come by will be followed with a blessing.'

And now, for a *conclusion* to all of you. What hath hitherto been spoken, is but, as it were, to prepare you a little for that great duty of 'Remembering NOW your CREATOR in the days of your YOUTH.' Be sure, you never will remember yourselves, if you forget the Lord. When the prodigal son came to himself, he presently thought of returning to his father, Luke xv. 17, 18, 19. Notwithstanding, all your sins against God, his bowels of *love* will receive you, 'If you do not refuse the mercy that is offered you.' He knows as well how to pardon the penitent, as to punish the impenitent. It is his infinite goodness to your souls, that you should have some to warn you before it be too late. In the number of which, I have desired to be *one*, out of an hearty well-wishing to your eternal good.

Read, and consider what follows; and the Lord give you understanding, and add his *own blessing*, teaching you faithfully to improve all the helps and furtherances, he is pleased to vouchsafe unto you, for your soul's advantage.

CHAP. I.

The Exposition of the Words.

ECCLES. xii. 1.

Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them.

SIRS,

THE Royal preacher king Solomon, in the latter part of the foregoing chapter, doth by an emphatical irony, dissuade young men from those youthful lusts, and sensual pleasures, whereto they are naturally addicted; and that by the consideration of the dreadful account they are to give unto GOD, at the GREAT DAY; as verse 9. 'Rejoice, O young man in thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.' As if he had said, Since thou art set upon it to have thy will, and thy way, to suck the sweet, and make the best of what is before thee, take thy course, take thy fill of thy pleasure, ease and heart's content, whilst thou livest, but remember what comes after; and know, that for all thy sweet morsels, and pleasant draughts, for all thy pleasant sins, youthful liberties, and those vain and wicked courses wherein thou now takest such content, and delight, 'God will bring thee into judgment.' Die thou must; thou knowest not how soon, and after death, thou shalt be brought before God's tribunal, there to answer for all thou hast done, and receive a just recompence of reward. Remember this, *O young man*, and then go on thy way at thy peril.

A serious consideration of the judgments of God, would be an excellent means to abate the heat of lust, and take off young men from those sensual delights, wherein they are commonly so drenched and drowned.

Solomon having thus dissuaded young men from their youthful lusts and pleasures, in the beginning of this chapter, he persuades them to the seeking of God, and that from their youth, and younger years, by several arguments.

The first is couched in the four first verses of this 12th chapter, taken from the unfitness of old men, to set themselves to the service of God, which they have neglected all the former part of their lives: 'Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' Briefly to clear the words.

Remember, Young men of all others in this case, have but short memories, are apt to forget God, his way and judgment, and to

leave the care of minding hereof to their old age; therefore the wise man knowing how unfit and unseasonable that would be to enter upon so great a work, advises them to begin betimes and early to fix their thoughts on God, and to consecrate their strength from the very first to him. For this *remembrance* in the text doth not only import an *act of memory*, but such a calling to mind as works upon the affection and practice, so as to set us a doing of what we know and remember.

'To remember God,' is the same as to 'know God, to love, fear, and serve him.' It is the same counsel which Solomon here gives, which once he received from his aged father, 1 Chron. xxviii. 9. 'And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and willing mind.' As God is said to remember man when he thinks upon him to do him good; so man doth then remember God, when he thinks upon him to do him service.

'Thy Creator,' From whom thou hast thy being, and well-being, thy creation and preservation, and therefore owest thyself and service unto him. As thou art from God, so thou oughtest to love and live unto him. He made thee a living soul after his own image, and thereby, as thou art more capable, so art thou the more obliged unto him; and that,

'Now in the days of thy youth.' Which is the prime of thy time, the flower of thine age, the strength of thy life, when thou art able to do him the best service. God will be served with the best of all thy strength, and will not be put off till thy strength be gone: Therefore now in the flower of thy youth give up thyself unto him.

'While the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.' That is, before old age seizeth on thee, which will be full of pains and sorrows, so that thou canst take no delight in any thing, neither canst thou find any desire or strength for service. Here the *days of old age* are called *evil*, because men are then subject to manifold infirmities and afflictions: As if he had said, seeing the *elder-days* are like to be *evil-days* full of pains and griefs, be sure thou do not add thereunto the bitterness of thy youthful lusts and pleasures, and the burden of those duties which should have been the business of thy youth. Shall the sins, and the works of an whole age, be laid upon thine aged shoulders, what an intolerable burden will that be to thee, who wilt find it hard enough for thee to bear up under thy diseases and infirmities! Be doing rather now in the days of thy youth, lay up against the time to come, be aforehand with thy necessary work, get to be rich in grace, abundant in good works, serving the Lord in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life, which may comfort thine heart against the evils

of thine old age, that so it may not be unto thee *evil*, but as it was to Abraham, a *good old age*, Gen. xxv. 8.

The drift of the wise man in these words, is to stir up young men to consecrate their youth and younger years especially to the remembering and serving of God; because old age being full of weakness and infirmities, it is very unfit then to begin to serve God or to mind the great work of repentance and reformation.

CHAP. II.

The grand Proposition, with the Reasons thereof.

FROM the drift and scope of Solomon in these words, may be raised this point of doctrine.

Doctrine, 'It is a duty incumbent upon all young men, to consecrate the prime and strength of their days to the service of God.' So to remember God, as to devote themselves to him. This was typified under the law, where the Lord required the *first-fruits* to be dedicated to him, the *first-born* to be sanctified to him, and the *young bullocks* and *lambs* to be offered in sacrifice to him; which was written for our learning, to teach and instruct us to offer to God the service of our *youth*, as well as of our *old age*. And is it not most equal, that as the *first-fruits* of other things, so the *first-fruits* of man, of his ripened understanding and affections, should be given unto God? Was not the Lord greatly offended, when men reserved the best of the flock to themselves, and offered the old, blind, and lame to him? And will he be well-pleased that we devote our youth and younger years to the service of Satan, and the satisfying of our own lusts, and reserve for *Him* only our decrepit old age.

This is likewise commended to us in the example of divers *young men* recorded in scripture. We read of Isaac, that while he was *young*, he accustomed himself to prayer and meditation, Gen. xxiv. 63. Of Josiah, that 'when he was eight years old, he did that which was right in the sight of the Lord: And in the eighth year of his reign, while he was young, he began to seek after the God of David his father,' 2 Chron. xxxiv. 1, 3. Of Obadiah, that 'he feared the Lord from his youth,' 1 Kings xviii. 12. And of Timothy, that 'from a child he had known the holy scriptures, which were able to make him wise unto salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. If any shall ask, 'wherewith shall a young man cleanse his way?' Surely by following the examples of such rare young men as these were.

The reasons of the point. Reas. 1. 'Youth is the fittest time that can be given to God, as being the spring-time, and excel-

lentest part of thy life.' In the *grave* there is no serving God: In thy old age it is bad serving *Him*, by reason of the manifold weaknesses and infirmities that accompany the same; therefore thy *youth* must needs be the fittest time for his service. For,

1. 'Youth is most active and vigorous, quick and lively, being not at all clogged with the infirmities of age.' Then is thy body strongest, thy wit sharpest, and thy memory most capable and retentive. How unworthy then is it for thee to sacrifice thy youth to Bacchus and Venus, to ungodly sensuality and luxury, and at last to lay thy old bones upon God's altar? O what pity it is, that the devil, the world, and the flesh, should have thy cream and flower: And how shameful, that God, to whom thy whole life is due, should have only the bran, and dregs!

2. 'Youth is the time of strength,' and the service of God, being no easy work, calls for thy utmost strength; the strength of thy body, as well as the strength of thy mind. Our Saviour requires, 'Strive to enter in at the strait gate.' The word in the Greek *Agonizesthe*, signifies a striving with our utmost skill, strength, and activity, as wrestlers do for mastery. And saith the apostle, 'Work out your salvation,' where the word in the original *Katergazete*, signifieth to work with the greater industry. Old men, whose strength is wasted, are like to make but *poor wrestlers* and as *poor workers*: And therefore what fitter time can there be in earnest to set upon the difficulties of religion, and godliness, and the mighty and weighty works thereof, than in the strength of our days?

Reas. 2. 'The service of thy youth is the most acceptable service unto God.' When Abraham manifested his willingness to sacrifice his *young son* Isaac, upon the command of God, oh how kindly did the Lord take it! And thereupon promised, yea, swore to him, saying, 'Because thou hast done this thing, that in blessing I will bless thee,' Gen. xxii. 16. In like manner, if thou shouldst consecrate thy younger years unto God, which is (as it were) to sacrifice thy Isaac, he will take it kindly at thy hands, and thou shalt be remembered with a blessing in thine age; 'for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.' When our Saviour heard the rich man in the gospel say, 'All these commandments have I kept from my youth,' the evangelist observes that 'beholding him he loved him,' to shew possibly how he loveth the service of young men, how pleasing and acceptable it is to him. And it is questionable, whether God, who calls for the *first-fruits* of thy life, if thou deny him that, will accept the gleanings of thine age.

Reas. 3. 'Another reason may be taken from the momentary shortness, and uncertainty of thy life. So *short* it is, that the whole of it, from first to last, is little enough for thy necessary work. To get an interest in Christ, to mortify thy lusts, to furnish thy-

self with grace, to fill up the fruits of righteousness and thereby to make sure to thyself a better life; believe it, those are not the works of a few days or hours.

And so *uncertain* is thy life, that thou hast no assurance of living one day longer. We are all but tenants at will, and may be turned out of our earthly tabernacle whensoever our great landlord pleases, even at a quarter's, yea, at a minute's warning. And, therefore, as thou hast any regard to the eternal welfare and salvation of thy precious soul, it behoveth thee now, even now to set to thy work, to abandon thy sins, to close with the tenders and offers of Jesus Christ, to give up thyself to the service of God, for thou knowest not what a day or an hour may bring forth.

A man that hath a work of great consequence to be done, and but one day for the doing it, had need rise early in the morning, and with all possible speed to fall upon it. This is thy case, thou hast a great work to be done, even the salvation of thy precious and immortal soul; and but a little time allowed thee for the doing of it, and that uncertain. Doth it not then concern thee speedily, without any further delay, to set about it, and to improve thy precious time to the best advantage?

Reas. 4. 'May be taken from the uncertainty of conversion in thine old age.' Though thou wert sure to live long, even to old age, and thereupon shouldest give up thyself to thy sensual liberties, and encourage thyself therein by the hopes of an after-repentance; yet how canst thou be sure that then at last thou shalt repent? Conversion is not in man's power, it is the work of God, which he is pleased to work on whom, and when he will. God is merciful to offer grace, but he is just also to punish the neglect thereof. I have read a story of a profane fellow, who was often wont to say, he doubted not but that he should repent at last, if he had but time to say three words, *Domine, miserere me*, *Lord have mercy on me.* Not long after, riding over a crazy bridge, both horse and man fell into the river; but instead of saying the former words, he cried out in these three words, *Capiat omnia dæmon*, *The Devil take all.* Young men, let this be a warning to you all, venture not on to-morrow, 'but to-day if you hear his voice, harden not your hearts,' Psal. xcv. 7. Now God calleth and inviteth thee to turn from thy sins unto him, and in good earnest to set upon the practice of an holy life. He now knocketh at the door of thine heart, offering to enter, that he may dwell in thee; but if thou refuse to let him in, how knowest thou whether ever he will knock again; And what if he should not? O what if he that knocks at thy door to-day, should (if thou now open not) never knock, or look after thee again for ever? O where must thine everlasting dwelling then be?

Reas. 5. 'May be taken from the manifold mischiefs which

will follow upon thy continuing thy sinful course of life, without turning unto God.'

1. 'The longer thou continuest in any sin, the stronger it will grow, and the more hardly be subdued.' The longer a tree is suffered to grow, the deeper rooting it taketh, and the more hardly will it be plucked up. In like manner, the longer thou continuest in sin, the deeper rooting will it take in thee, and with the greater difficulty be removed. As therefore we would condemn him of extreme folly, who essaying to pluck up a young plant, and finding some difficulty therein, should let it stand till it had taken deeper rooting in the ground, and then attempt to pull it up: So alike, nay, much more foolish is that man, who in his youth, and younger years, finding some difficulty in turning from his sins unto God, should put it off until his sins had taken faster hold of him, supposing that then he should more easily do it. The truth is, it is rarely seen, that such who give up themselves to the service of sin and Satan in their youth, do serve God in their old age. How seldom do we hear of an old sinner converted? 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the Leopard his spots? Then may you also do good, who are accustomed to do evil,' Jer. xiii. 23. As if it were a thing impossible for one that has continued long in a course of sinning, to leave and forsake it, and to give up himself to the service of God. Surely with man it is impossible, though not with God, unto whom all things are possible. It will be therefore thy wisdom betimes, even in thy youth, to set thyself against the power of thy corruptions, lest they grow too strong to be mastered and subdued.

2. 'Continuance in a course of sinning will so insensibly harden thy heart, that thou wilt find the work more difficult.' Though thou mayest flatter thyself with a conceit that thou wilt cast off thy sins, and become a new man hereafter; yet thou wilt find by sad experience, that the longer thou detainest them, the harder it will be to part with them: For every sin doth not only bring a guilt upon the soul, but likewise a stronger inclination to the practice thereof. How many be there, who, in their youth, and younger years, were wont often to say, 'It is too soon to part with our beloved sins, there is time enough for that hereafter:' But when their hereafter hath been come, then have they said, 'It is too late; our hearts are so hardened, that now we cannot repent.'

3. 'The longer thou deferrest thy reformation and amendment, the greater indisposition and disability wilt thou find in thyself thereunto.' Their understanding will be more and more darkened with the mist of ignorance; thy will, through custom in sinning, be more stubborn and refractory to the will of God revealed in his word: thy conscience will be more and more seared: yea, all the powers of thy soul will be more and more distracted with earthly

cares and businesses : What folly then must it needs be, to put off thy serving of God from thy younger to thine elder years!

4. 'By continuing in a course of sinning, we come to a custom and habit of sinning, which will be hardly left or broken off.' For custom in sin, takes away all conscience of sin, and hardeneth the heart more and more against God and godliness : Yea, custom is another nature ; and that which is natural, is not easily changed. It is found by experience, that such who have been long accustomed to drinking, swearing, or any other vices, are very hardly reclaimed from the same : What egregious folly then must it needs be in any, who now finding it somewhat difficult to break off his course of sinning, and betake himself to a strict course of life, should defer it longer, until the corruption of nature, through custom of sinning, grow stronger and stronger in him! If ever, therefore, thou intendest to give over thy sinning trade, and to devote thyself to the service of God, it will be thy wisdom speedily to set upon it, before thy sins be confirmed by custom.

5. 'Thy long continuance in a sinful course of life, will make thy repentance much more grievous and bitter.' Some men in their new-birth, feel far greater pangs and throes than others ; some are even on the rack, through dreadful horrors in their consciences, and a deep apprehension of the wrath and vengeance of God due unto them for their sins : And these are usually such as are either guilty of some gross and heinous sin, or else have for a long time run on in a course of sinning against God. St. Paul having been a blasphemer, and a persecutor of the church of God, his new-birth cost him many a bitter throe ; he was so deeply humbled and cast down with a sight and sense of his sins, and heinousness of them, that for three days he did neither eat nor drink, Acts ix. 9. Mary Magdalene, having been a notorious sinner, it is recorded, that at her conversion, she wept so abundantly, that she washed the feet of our Saviour with her tears and wiped them with the hairs of her head, Luke vii. 38. And, indeed, most men's sorrow and humiliation for their sins, is usually suitable to the number and heinousness of their sins. As therefore, thou wouldst avoid those dreadful terrors and bitter throes, those heart-melting sorrows, which possess many in their new-birth, it will be thy wisdom speedily, even now in thy youth, and youngest years, before thou hast contracted many great and heinous sins, to engage thyself in the ways of godliness.

6. 'Continuance in sin without sincere repentance, will make thy condemnation more intolerable.' By delaying to turn from thy sins unto God, as thou dost prepare more matter for thy grief and sorrow, so thou dost treasure up more fuel for thy everlasting burning ; which the apostle plainly expresses, Rom. ii. 5. 'But thou,' saith he, 'after thy hardness and impenitent heart, treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath, and revela-

tion of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, whether they be good or bad.' So that, continuance in sinning, without true and unfeigned repentance, must needs occasion an heavier weight of vengeance at last: For, he that adds to his sins, doth certainly add to his own punishment, *treasuring up wrath against the day of wrath;* and gathering as it were, more wood to increase those flames, which shall burn to all eternity.

Reas. 6. 'May be taken from the benefits which follow and accompany thine early serving of God.'

1. 'Thereby thou wilt prevent manifold sins, especially thy youthful lusts;' which to many prove very bitter in their age, when God is pleased to set them home upon their consciences, or suffer them to fly in their faces. As every calling, so every age of life, has its special and peculiar sins, unto which it is most subject. Thus *covetousness* is usually the old man's sin, and *voluptuousness* the young man's sin; the remembrance of which oft-times is very grievous in old age: Therefore Job speaks of some wicked men, Job. xx. 11. *whose bones are full of the sins of their youth;* meaning, that they feel more smart in their old age, than ever they found pleasure and delight in them in their youth. It must be a sad burden, when men in their old age, do feel the heavy weight of their youthful lusts: and yet, what more ordinary! We read of Job, that though he was *one that truly feared God, and eschewed evil*, as God himself testifieth of him, Job i. 3. yet was the remembrance of the sins of his youth very bitter unto him. 'Thou writest bitter things against me; and makest me to possess the sins of my youth,' saith he, Job xiii. 26.

Oh then, how bitter and grievous will they be unto them, who in their youth do wholly prostrate themselves to lust and lewdness? Such as in their younger years have taken great pains, and thereby got heats and colds, are apt to cry out of aches and stitches in their age. Young sinner, look for it, thy early pleasures and youthful wantonness, and that drudgery which they have put thee to, are like to be stitches in thy aged sides, and swords in thy heart and soul.

Oh young man! how should the consideration thereof stir thee up, even now in the days of youth, to remember thy Creator, and to dedicate thyself unto him! thereby thou mayest prevent both thy present sins; and those bitter returns they are otherwise like to make thee after many days.

2. 'By thine early serving God, the exercises of religion will be more pleasant and easy unto thee;' for often use will bring thee to a custom, and long custom will work in thee a habit, which will be easy and familiar, and habits, whether good or evil, will be more easily gotten in youth than in age. We find by daily experience, when young men are put apprentices to such trades as

are hard to be learned, they soon attain to the mystery of them, and become dexterous therein; whereas, if men in their old age, should set about learning of them, they would never attain to any perfection therein. In like manner, if thou, from thy youth wouldst accustom thyself to the exercise of religion, and works of sanctification, thou wouldst sooner attain the skill and practice of them: whereas, if thou shouldst put them off to old age, they would come off very hardly, and thou wouldst find thyself very unapt and untoward thereunto.

3. 'The sooner thou beginnest to serve God here, the greater will be thy reward hereafter in heaven;' for thy reward there, will be proportioned to thy work here. Though no man shall be rewarded for his works, but only through the merits of his blessed Saviour Jesus Christ; yet, God of his free grace hath promised to reward us *according to our works;* as the apostle expresseth, Rom. ii. 6. *He will render to every one according to his deeds;* implying, that the measure of glory hereafter, shall be proportioned to the measure of our sanctification and obedience here: so that I may apply that of the apostle, 1 Cor. ix. 6. 'He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; and he that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.' Look, as here men's harvest is usually answerable to their sowing, in like manner, the reward of God's people in heaven shall be answerable to the seed which is sown by them *here;* he who soweth liberally *here*, abounding in duties of piety, and works of righteousness, shall have a liberal reward in heaven. Now, the sooner any man begins to engage his heart to God, the more service will he do *him* in this life, and consequently, the greater reward shall he have from him in the *life to come*. Oh, what stronger argument, or greater encouragement than this, can young men possibly have, to devote and consecrate themselves, from their youth and tender years, to the service of their Creator!

The point being thus proved by *scripture*, *example*, and *reasons;* come we now to the application thereof.

CHAP. III.

Contains a sharp Reproof of those who devote their Flower and Prime to the Service of Satan; and their sinful Lusts, and reserve their decayed strength for God.

Use 1. IS it a duty incumbent upon all young men, to consecrate themselves to the service of God? Then 'such are to be reproved, who devote their flower and prime to the service of Satan, and their sinful lusts; and reserve their decayed strength

for God and his service, accounting the very dregs and refuse of all to be good enough for *him*, for whom the best and principal is not worthy.

Under the law, they were forbidden to offer any thing unto the Lord 'that had a blemish; *or*, that were lame and blind,' Lev. iii. 1, 12, 18, 19, 20. and Deut. xv. 21. And for transgressing this law, the Lord reprehended his people by the prophet Malachi, Mal. i. 8. 'If ye offer the blind for sacrifice, is it not evil? and if ye offer the lame and sick, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy governor, will he be pleased with thee, or accept thy person, saith the Lord of hosts?' Was not the Lord greatly offended, when men reserved the best of the flocks to themselves, and offered the old, the blind, and the lame to him? And will he be well pleased, that thou shouldst dedicate thy best unto Satan, and reserve for him only thy decrepit, lame, and withered age, when thy body is full of diseases, and thy mind of infirmities? Will God accept the devil's leavings? Shall sin have thy blood and spirits, and thy marrow; and thy God be put off with skin and bones? He that hath had the best, may, even take all: God will laugh at thee in thy evening, who laugheth at him in the morning of thy days.

Is it not extreme folly, while the ship is sound, the tackle good, the mariners hale and strong, to lie playing and sporting at road; and when the ship is crazy, the tackle weak and rotten, the mariners sick, then to hoist sail for a voyage into a far country? And how unwise a man art thou, who will delay the voyage for heaven, till the vessel be broken, and those worms, thy lusts, that have been bred in it, have eaten it through, and made it utterly useless.

We generally confess that our sins must be left, and that God must be sought and served, but we cannot accord of the time when to begin. One saith, he will begin when he hath served his apprenticeship, and is out of his time; another, when he is made free, and set up for himself; another when he is married; another when he is old. Thus every one is apt to procrastinate. The whole world almost are men for *hereafter*. When must God be minded? *hereafter*. When must these souls be looked to? *hereafter*. When must these sins be sent a packing? *hereafter*. When we have served ourselves in this world, then we will be for the other world; and when we have satisfied our lusts, then we will satisfy our consciences; and when we are unfit and unable for any thing else, then we will follow God. When we are scarce able to turn our wearied bones in our bed, then will we think of returning to him. Canst thou think God will accept thereof? Believe it if thou canst. Mark what the prophet Malachi speaketh, chap. i. 14. 'Cursed be the man that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and consecrateth unto the Lord a corrupt thing.' Who

hath the male of thy flock? Whose is the first-born of thy strength? Doth the devil carry away that? And must this corrupt thing, this weak, and weary, and sickly time of thine age be the offering for God? What, thinkest thou, will he say to thee, but 'Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and consecrateth unto the Lord a corrupt thing?'

CHAP. IV.

Containing an Use of Exhortation unto all Young Men, to offer unto God the First-fruits of their Lives.

Use 2. 'OF Exhortation unto all men to offer unto God the first-fruits of their lives, to give themselves to him betimes, and so forthwith to have done with the service of their sins, and in earnest to betake themselves to holiness, and righteousness of life. Though the devil, the world, and the flesh have been aforehand with Christ, and have gotten possession of thine heart, yet now, without further delay, give a bill of divorce to them all, cast out the bond-woman and her children, and open unto Jesus Christ, who stands knocking at the door of thine heart for entrance, who by the admonitions of his ministers, the motions of his Spirit, and the checks of thine own conscience, doth call out to thee, 'Open to me, I pray thee, let me come in.' O let not thy love to thy lusts so far prevail with thee, as to put off Christ to another time; but this day open to him, embrace him for thy Prince and Saviour, resign up thyself to him, to serve and obey him, before thou art too far engaged in the service of sin and Satan; say with David, That *God shall be thy God, and thou wilt seek him early*, Psal. lxiii. 1. even now in the spring of life while the day of health and the day of grace have dawned upon thee.

Consider, O young man, how unfit old age, is either to grapple with thy lust, or thy duties; to resist the tyranny of sin, or to bear the difficulties of religion. We find by experience, that the soul acting by and through the body, acts according to the disposition thereof. When the body is dull and heavy through age, or infirmity, the soul acts thereafter. Is thy dullness or coldness all that thou wilt spare to the God of thy spirit? How will *He* take it at thy hands? when the devil hath rode thee off thy legs, and so lamed and crippled thee, that thou canst do no more, then thou wilt be for God: Think how well this will please thy Maker. *Ye shall not see me*, said Joseph to his brethren, *except you bring your younger brother with you*, Gen. xliii. 2. And how canst thou look to behold the face of the Lord Jesus with comfort, if thou bring not unto him thy youth and strength?

Now, therefore, O young man, in the morning of thy life, while the faculties of thy soul, and parts of thy body, are fresh and quick, set thy face heaven-ward, especially considering how great thy work, as a christian, is like to be, even greater than thou canst dispatch in thine age. Those evil customs and habits which have been long growing, cannot easily be cut off. Those strong corruptions which have taken root in thy heart, cannot readily be removed: That knowledge, grace, peace, comfort, and assurance, which thou needest, cannot be attained without great labour and industry. The work of religion requires time; it concerns to set upon it presently, and not to be so great a fool, as to say, 'It is time enough yet.' Though thou hast foolishly mispent so much of thy oil already in vanity and pleasure, in sin and wickedness, yet now be ashamed of thy folly, and bewail thy former mispent time, and manifold miscarriages, resolving with the assistance of God's grace, to abandon thy lusts, and to give up thine heart unto God with all speed. Thou hast a price yet in thy hands, be so wise as carefully to embrace, and faithfully improve the same.

Young man, if thou mind not now in the days of thy youth the things of thine eternal welfare, it is a question whether ever thou wilt do it. It is rarely found, that such as have run out their youth and strength in the service of the devil, do ever prove the true servants of God in their age: For an old sinner to be converted, is no ordinary nor easy thing: *Can a man be born when he is old?* was Nicodemus's wonder: And truly, for an old sinner to be regenerated, and born anew, may be the wonder of us all. Examples of this kind are so rare, that if it were considered, it would make old sinners tremble. How few do we find among all the *disciples* of Christ, that came in at the last hour! Besides, canst thou imagine that such a sinner deserveth favour, who cometh in to serve God at last, when he can serve his lusts no longer?

Now, O young man, what is thy purpose and resolution? Art thou yet for thine old ways, and sensual delights? Or dost thou intend to give a present adieu to them, together with all thy lewd companions? And to give up thyself to God, to devote thyself to his fear and service? For aught thou knowest, this may be the very day and time of thy last choice. Oh be not so foolish and unwise as to choose the pleasures of sin here for a season (which, without unfeigned repentance, will assuredly end in everlasting torments) before the path of life, which certainly leads unto eternal bliss and happiness. Why wilt thou not now be wise to eternity? Why wilt thou not speedily renounce thy former wicked course and lewd companions, and embrace the ways of godliness? The Lord persuade thine heart thereunto. Better thou hadst never been born, than that thou shouldst at last be found in the case and way that *now* thou art in. What not yet enough of thy folly and vanity? 'When wilt thou return? O when shall it once be?'

CHAP. V.

Containing several objections of many young Men against their early seeking and serving of God.

I KNOW there are several objections which young men are apt to make for themselves against their early seeking and serving of God, which I shall endeavour to answer.

Obj. 1. Should I now in my youth set upon the practice, and walk in the ways of godliness, I must look for nothing but jeers and scoffs from my companions and acquaintance.

Ans. 1. 'There it is, none are more evil spoken of, and traduced, than such as walk in the ways of holiness:' But the *grounds* of it spring not from their just deserving, but from the world's malice and enmity to God, which is derived to them for his sake.

2. 'Those jeers and scoffs which are cast upon thee by thy carnal friends, should be an encouragement, rather than a discouragement in the ways of godliness,' in that they may prove a blessing unto thee. For, saith our Saviour, Matth. v. 11. 'Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake: Rejoice, and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.' Therefore the primitive saints rejoiced, that they were counted worthy to suffer *scorn* and *reproaches;* yea, any thing, for the name of Christ: Scoffs and disgraces do oft-times increase, as the graces of God's people, so likewise their glory. He that takes from a saint's credit doth add to his crown.

4. 'Though thy neighbours and companions may outwardly scoff at thy holy walking; yet know, that at the same time they may inwardly reverence and honour thee:' For there sits a kind of majesty in the face of holiness, which draws, even from carnal men, fear and reverence.

Obj. 2. Should I now in my youth bid adieu to my fleshly, and betake myself to a godly life, I shall lose my friends, and make them mine enemies.

Answ. 'If thou shouldst lose thy carnal friends upon such an occasion, thy loss will prove thy gain.' Thou shalt gain Christ for thy friend, who will be better to thee than all thy relations. Can they obtain the pardon of thy sins? procure thy peace and reconciliation with God? quiet thy troubled conscience? support thy fainting soul, and cheer up thy drooping spirit? miserable helps, and miserable comforts will they be all to thee. Whereas Christ is both able and willing to do all this, and much more for thee. Mark that notable promise in Matth. xix. 29. 'Every man that hath forsaken brethren or sisters, father or mother, wife, or children, or any near and dear relations for my sake, shall receive

an hundred fold.' Christ will be instead of all relations unto him who is infinitely more than all the worldly comforts whatsoever: Yea, such shall be rewarded with everlasting happiness, according to that of our Saviour, Luke vi. 22, 23. 'Blessed are ye when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company, rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, for, behold, your reward is great in heaven.'

Obj. If I should now in my youth set myself to the seeking and serving of God, I must look to be low and poor in the world; for whoever grew rich by a strict and holy walking? yea, have not the rich men ot the world raised their families to such greatness and grandeur by wicked practices and unconscionable dealing?

Answ. 1. 'True it is, the wicked, for the most part, thrive and prosper in the world:' God giveth them their portion in this world, to make them the more inexcusable.

II. 'It is not godliness, but rather the want thereof, that often occasions poverty.' The wise man saith expressly, Prov. xxiii. 21. 'The drunkard and glutton shall come to poverty.' And, speaking of the sin of *whoredom*, saith, Prov. vi. 26. 'By the means of a whorish woman a man is brought to a piece of bread,' that is, to such extreme poverty, that he hath scarce a piece of bread to eat, but is forced to beg from door to door for a morsel of bread: So that it is wickedness, and not holiness, that brings beggary and ruin. There is, I know, a devilish proverb, frequent in the mouths of wicked and profane men, 'That piety and plain-dealing is a jewel, but he that useth it shall die a beggar.' But much good may it do the unrighteous with all their gettings, the godly shall never be so poor, but they shall have riches enough.

1. *First*, 'The Lord hath in his word made many gracious promises to bless the righteous,' as in their bodies and souls, so in their goods and estates;' as, Deut. xxviii. 1, 2. 'It shall come to pass, if thou shalt hearken diligently to the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe, and to do all his commandments, blessed shalt thou be in the city, and blessed shalt thou be in the field: Blessed shall be thy basket and thy store. The Lord shall command the blessings upon thee, in thy store-house, and all thou puttest thine hand unto,' &c. And saith our Saviour, Matth. vi. 33. 'Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you;' that is, food and raiment, yea, wealth, and all temporal blessings, so far as they shall be good for you, shall be freely cast upon you, as an overplus into the bargain.

2. 'We find the Lord hath made good these promises to his people, so far as hath been good for them;' whereof we have many instances in scripture, as in Abraham, who was born a good man, and a great man, abounding with much wealth. The like we read of Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph in Egypt, of Job, and oth-

ers. In all which *grace* and *greatness* sweetly met together. As the ark brought a blessing to Obed-edom's house, so I may truly say godliness brings a blessing to the house and person in whom it is, 'having the promise of all needful temporal good things here, as well as of eternal happiness hereafter. 1 Tim. iv. 8. So that there can be no likelier way to thrive and prosper in the world, than betimes to give up thyself to God, and to consecrate thy youth and younger years to his service.

III. 'A little that a righteous man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked,' Psal. xxxvii. 16.

1. For 'First, Godly men have an heart given them from God, to use and enjoy their estate, whatever it is, for their own good, and the relief of others.' They have mercies, and taste of them; they have goods, and do good with them; whereas wicked men either have no heart at all to use their estates, or else they spend them upon their lusts; for which they shall full dearly answer at the great, and dreadful day.

2. 'What the godly have, they enjoy with much comfort and contentment, with much peace and quietness of mind, and they find more sufficiency and fulness in their little, than many rich worldlings do in their plenty and abundance:' For those, though they have much, yet they find no content nor satisfaction, no quietness therein, but much vexation of spirit; whereas the righteous, though they have but little, yet they have a good and quiet conscience with it, which is a continual feast, yea, they find a fulness therein, so that they sit down abundantly satisfied and contented therewith; for God puts a fulness into their little, and makes it more satisfactory to his children, than greater abundance is to carnal worldly men.

Obj. 4. Should I hearken to your counsel, I should thereby deprive myself of all joy and delight (which is the very life of my life) and lead a sad melancholy life: For, what doth more abridge men of pleasure and delight than walking in the ways of godliness?

Answ. 1. 'A good life will not deprive thee of all joy and delight, but only change thy rejoicing in evil for rejoicing in that which is good.' Whereas before thou rejoicedst in the pleasures of sin, in rioting and revelling, in chambering and wantonness, now thou wilt rejoice in the assurance of God's love and thy own salvation, in the undoubted testimony of his grace and favour towards thee; which is indeed a blessed change of joy from carnal to spiritual, from what is vain and frothy, to that which is sound and solid.

2. 'The *godly* sometimes, by reason of their present affliction under which they lie, may seem sorrowful, yet are they always rejoicing;' as the apostle speaks, 2 Cor. vi. 10. 'As sorrowful, yet always rejoicing.' And our blessed Saviour promised to his disciples, and in them to all the faithful, 'that he would give them

such a permanent joy, as no man should be able to take from them,' John xvi. 22. Whereupon saith David, 'The voice of rejoicing is in the tabernacle of the righteous,' Psal. cxviii. 15.

3. 'Though wicked men think and say that the godly, lead sad melancholy lives, yet certain it is, that the ungodly, when they are alone, are generally melancholy.' Indeed when they are in taverns and ale-houses with their vain companions, then they can laugh and sing; but in their secret retirements, none so dull and dumpish as they: Yea, through the checks and clamours of their guilty consciences, they are oft-times sorrowful in the very midst of laughter. For wickedness is so far from producing peace and comfort that it is properly the cause of sorrow and discomfort. Therefore saith the prophet, Isa. v. 7. 'The waters cast up mire and dirt;' and then no wonder that it follows, 'There is no peace to the wicked;' it being the property of wickedness to be troublesome and vexatious, so that little joy or comfort can be found in a vicious course of life: Whereas godliness brings great pleasure and content to the mind of a man; which the apostle implies, 1 Cor. ii. 12. 'Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world.' The satisfaction which arises from the testimony of a man's own conscience, in the faithful discharge of his duty, is very pleasant and delightful: In which respect, saith David, Psal. xix. 11. 'In keeping thy commandments there is great reward.' There is not only a reward hereafter, to all such as sincerely endeavour to keep the commandments of the Lord, but likewise a reward here in keeping them, man finding a complacency and delight therein, being satisfied that they have in some measure performed their duty.

4. 'There is no joy comparable to their joy who set themselves to serve God in truth and sincerity.' Such, the apostle Peter saith, 'Rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory,' 1 Pet. i. 8. Therefore the wise man, speaking in the commendation of godliness, saith, 'Her ways are ways of pleasantness,' Prov. iii. 17. As if he had said, though worldly men do judge the ways of godliness to be sad and uncomfortable, yet they do indeed yield great joy and pleasure to those that walk in them, and therefore may well be said to be the *ways of pleasantness*. For,

1. 'In the ways of godliness God doth communicate himself to thy soul, and the soul doth enjoy sweet communion with God:' The soul doth enjoy, as the influences of God's grace, so the light of his countenance, which is, as it were, an heaven upon earth; yea, the greatest happiness, poor creatures can possibly attain unto.

2. 'The ways of godliness are ways of pleasantness, because the walking in them is pleasing and delightful unto God.' And a gracious heart must needs take great complacency and contentment in that which is pleasing unto God.

3. 'There is that delight in the ways of godliness as upholds the heart of a christian under all the losses, crosses, and afflictions he meets withal in the world, and which will yield him abundance of comfort upon his death-bed.' What was that which comforted king Hezekiah when he lay under the apprehension of death, but the testimony of his conscience, that he had walked with much sincerity in the ways of godliness? Isa. xxxviii. 3.

By all which it appeareth, that godliness doth not deprive men of all joy and delight; but rather the more godly they are, the more joyful, at least the better right and title they have thereunto; whereupon, saith one, 'Wouldst thou live cheerfully? then live godly.'

The which should be an encouragement unto all young men, who are yet unresolved, speedily without any further delay, to consecrate their youth and younger years unto God and his service, betimes to walk in the ways of godliness, that so their lives may be the more comfortable and joyful. If the Lord shall be pleased to incline any of your hearts thereunto, you will have cause to bless God for it, not only so long as you live here, but even to all eternity in the highest heavens. For by devoting yourselves to God and his service betimes, even from your youth, many sins will be prevented, which otherwise will be committed by you, much more good will be done by you, and much greater will be your glory hereafter.

5. *Obj.* I have time enough before me, and therefore may for a while longer allow myself my liberty. Hereafter may be time enough to turn from my sins to God, and to mind the eternal *welfare* of my *soul.*

Answ. 1. 'Consider, as the shortness, so the uncertainty of life.' How many have we known in our own experience, who when they have promised unto themselves life for many years, have been suddenly taken away? Thou sayest thou hast time enough before thee, canst thou upon good ground assure thyself of another day? If not, what folly, yea, what madness must it needs be, to live one day longer in such a condition, in which, if thou shouldst die, thou art miserably undone to all eternity! True it is, God hath promised pardon and forgiveness to such as in truth and sincerity turn from their sins to him, but he hath not promised the morrow to him that deferreth.

If thou sayest, Though I am not sure to live another day, yet I am likely, being in good health and strength.

I answer; peradventure thou mayest live another day. But what man, in his right senses, would put his everlasting salvation upon a *peradventure? Peradventure* thou mayest die the next day, even whilst thou art immersed in sensual pleasures and delights; and then how sad is thy case like to be to all *eternity?* The possibility of a sudden and unexpected death should, methinks, be

an effectual argument to persuade every man speedily, without further delay, to reform and amend his life. The merchant having a fair wind, will not defer to hoist up sail, saying, *We have time enough:* because it is possible the wind may turn, and he lose his opportunity. The husbandman having a fair day, will not defer the carrying home his corn when it is fit to take it in, because it is possible the next day may prove rainy. In all cases about our worldly affairs, a possibility of danger hath the force of argument for the present care? And why should it not as well awaken our souls to a speedy amendment of our ways?

2. 'Thou who still delayest to hearken unto the calls of God in the ministry of the word, wooing and beseeching thee speedily to abandon thy sins; and to walk in the ways of holiness, know assuredly, that He will not always wait on thee, his patience will not ever attend thee.' As there is a time of grace, in which the gate of mercy stands open, so there is a time of judgment, in which this gate will be shut, and all possibility of entry taken away. Psal. xxxii. 6. David speaks of a time *in which God may be found;* which implies, that there is a time in which God will not be found. Tho' thou criest out against thy sins, and criest to God for mercy, yet he will not hear thee, but turn a deaf ear to all thy prayers: So the Lord threateneth, Prov. i. 24, 25. *Because I have called you* to amendment and reformation, and *ye refused* to hearken unto me, 'but have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproofs; I will also laugh at your calamity, I will mock when your fear cometh: Then shall they call upon me, but I will not answer; they shall seek me, but they shall not find me.' For the Lord usually punisheth the slighting of his grace in our younger years, with the denying of it in our elder. Hence it is that the apostle St. Paul so much presseth the (TO NUN) the *very Now; Behold*, saith he, *NOW is the accepted time; NOW is the day of salvation*, 2 Cor. vi. 2. The time present is the only time, the time to come is no time, but a matter of mere uncertainty: and therefore, saith he, Heb. iii. 17. 'To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.' Where the word *Hemeron*, *to-day*, signifies the time present; implying, that the present opportunity of God's offering grace ought to be embraced; thou must hearken to him *now*, that he calls upon thee in the ministry of his word, and motions of his Spirit, to give over thy sinning trade, and give up thyself to him and his service: now, that God hangs forth a white flag of mercy, and is willing to be gracious to thee: now, that Christ is wooing and beseeching thee to cast away thy sins, and to cast thyself upon him, to own him for thy Lord and Saviour: Now, that the Spirit of God is striving with thee; surely it will be thy wisdom speedily to turn from thy sins unto him. If thou put him off till hereafter, and therefore quench the motions of his Spirit, how justly may he for ever reject thee?

3. 'Thou, who, upon a pretence of having time enough before thee, dost procrastinate and delay to look after God and heaven; consider, as the weightiness, so the multitude of works to be done by thee, in order to thy salvation.' Hast thou not a dead soul to be quickened? A dark understanding to be enlightened with the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ? A hard heart to be softened? A proud heart to be humbled? An unclean heart to be purified and cleansed? A multitude of head-strong lusts to be mortified and subdued? Manifold temptations to be resisted and conquered? Hast thou all these, and many more things to do, in reference to thy future happiness; and yet, wilt thou trifle away thy precious time in vanity and pleasure, yea, in sin and wickedness, saying *thou hast time enough before thee?* Know, that the aforementioned works are enough to take up thy whole life, How then canst thou imagine, that the short remaining part thereof should be sufficient for them?

Ah sinner! be convinced that these things must be done by thee, or else thou wilt be undone for ever; and then judge, whether it be not high time for thee to bid adieu to all sinful pleasures and delights, and seriously to mind the concernments of thy precious and immortal soul. Surely thou canst not be so simple, as to flatter thyself with a conceit, that all those things may be done either in time of sickness, or in old age.

First, 'For the time of sickness;' that must needs be very unfit, in regard of the many lets and impediments which then usually fall out to hinder the performance of them; as pains of body, faintness of spirit, dulness and deadness of heart, perplexity of mind, partly through fear of God's judgments, and partly with disposing thy outward estate for the future maintenance of wife and children? which will not suffer thee to collect thy spirits, as is requisite for such weighty works.

Secondly. As 'for old age,' which is scarce able to bear the infirmities of nature, how unfit must that needs be for such hard and difficult service? How can it be expected, that such as are in a manner past working, should go through the greatest works that in this world are to be performed? Eccles. xii. 1. Solomon calls the days of old age *evil days;* not because they are so in themselves, but because of the manifold weaknesses and diseases, pains and aches, which do accompany them, whereby they are very much disabled unto any good work. And therefore, to put off the main business of our lives, the things which concern the salvation of our souls, to old age, must needs be the greatest folly in the world, because in so doing we put it to the hazard, whether ever it will be done. Besides that God, who requires the first-fruits of all we have, will not be put off with the devil's leavings. If a soldier should spend the strength of his days in service *against* his prince, and in his old age offer his service to him, would he, think

ye, accept thereof, and not rather reject him and his service? Canst thou imagine that God will accept the service of thy old age, when thou hast spent the strength of thy years in the service of sin and Satan?

4. 'Thou, who sayest thou hast time enough before thee, and thereupon resolvest hereafter to be for God and holiness, know, that thereby thou deceivest thine own soul:' for, no resolution can be hearty and sincere, but what is present. He who is willing to indulge his sinful flesh but a day longer, would as willingly do it a year longer, yea, to eternity, if he might. He who is not willing to cast away his sins, and to close with Christ to-day, will never do it by his good-will. Thy *purposes* and *resolutions* for the time to come, are but *deceitful* and *hypocritical:* O trust not to deceitful purposes.

5. 'Thou who delayest to serve God, out of a pretence thou hast time enough before thee, I would ask thee, what shew of reason hast thou for it?' Haply then wilt say, Oh, the contentment I find in my present course is so sweet and delightful to me, that I cannot as yet deny myself therein. But is thy lust sweeter than Christ? than pardon of sins? than peace and reconciliation with God? yea, than the joys of heaven? Sure thou art a brute, if thou say so. And if not, why dost thou not presently reform and return to the Lord? Is it too soon for thee yet to be happy? Thou art worthy to die for ever, who chusest to live longer in the estate of the dead, when thou mightest presently turn and live.

6. 'Thou who sayest thou hast time enough before thee, hast thou not served the devil and sin long enough? Hast thou not done enough to the damning of thy own soul; but thou must go on further in thy wicked and ungodly course?' Certainly, if thou hadst any of the ingenuity of Christians within thee, thou wouldst rather say, 'I have long enough wallowed in the filth of sin, and mire of sinful filthiness: I have long enough slighted the free grace of God, and rejected the invitation of Jesus Christ; it is a shame I have stood out so long. Well, I have now done with iniquity; from henceforth I will be for Christ and holiness. Farewel my former sinful courses and companions; farewel my carnal peace, ease, and pleasure; it is high time to mind the eternal welfare of my soul, and to give up myself to God.'

7. Consider, 'Though sound repentance is never too late, yet late repentance is seldom sound, like untimely fruit, it rarely cometh to any perfection;' as may evidently appear from the usual practice of such as recover of their sickness, who, in time of affliction, seemed mightily troubled for their wicked lives; and outwardly bewailed their sins, crying out against them; yea, made many vows and promises of newness of life, and better obedience, professing, for the time to come, utterly to renounce their former lewd courses, and to serve God *in true holiness and righteousness* all

the remaining part of their days; yet, being recovered to their former health again, forgetting the *vows* and *promises* they made in the time of their sickness, with the dog they have *returned to their former vomit*, and with the sow wallowed again in the filth of sin, and mire of sinful filthiness, embracing the same sins they had formerly lamented; and so became worse than before. It was the observation of that worthy divine Mr. Robert Bolton, that he never knew or heard of any man unwrought upon under conscionable means, who, after recovery, performed the *vows* and *promises* of a new life, which he made in his sickness and time of extremity: which, methinks, should be a strong motive to persuade every one of us 'to turn from our sins, and to give up ourselves entirely unto God in our health and strength;' so we may have some *comfortable evidence* of the truth and soundness of our *repentance*.

8. 'Consider the desperate hazard thou runnest by delaying to close with Jesus Christ.' For, what if thy great change should come before the change of thy heart? how sad would thy condition be? What if Christ, who hath long been knocking at the door of thine heart, should withdraw himself, and never knock again? Surely, as it was one of the greatest *mercies* that ever was vouchsafed to thee, that Jesus Christ should condescend to stand and knock at the door of thine heart, so, it will prove in the event the heaviest judgment that ever befel thee, if thou wilt not now open to him, but put him off with delays; it will be just with Christ, finally to withdraw himself from those who will not hearken unto him in this his merciful day of visitation. Beware that this be not thy case.

9. 'Thou who sayest thou hast time enough before thee, and thereupon yet a while longer will venture after the devil:' Suppose thou shouldst at the latter end of thy life turn from thy sins unto God, which (as I shewed before) is not ordinary, yet, must it needs be matter of grief and sorrow to thee, then to call to mind how thou hast spent the strength of thy youth, the best of thy days, in the service of sin and Satan; and now hast little time, and less strength, remaining for God and his service. Surely, this will be matter of great shame and sorrow to thy soul; and therefore, as thou tenderest the honour of God, and thine own eternal happiness, *now* stir up in thyself a longing desire after the work of grace in thy soul, and put thyself upon a present and serious use of the means, delay not a day longer, lest that day be unto death.

10. 'Thou who still goest on impenitently in thy wicked course of life, consider how sad and dreadful thy condition is, so long as thou continuest therein.'

1. 'Thou art under the guilt of sin.' All the sins that ever thou committed are yet on thy score, none of them are blotted out. Surely, if one sin laid to the charge of a sinner, is enough to sink him irrecoverably into perdition. Oh then, how sad is thy condi-

tion, who liest under the guilt of many millions of sins, clothed with many aggravating circumstances.

2. 'Thou art under the power and dominion of sin, yielding up thyself to the command of every lust;' yea, such a slave art thou to every filthy and unclean motion, that though thou knowest very well, that the fire of lust will centre in the fire of hell (without speedy *repentance*) yet, wilt thou gratify thyself therein. The truth is, there is not so great a *tyrant* in the world as SIN, therefore, there can be no greater madness and folly, than to serve such a master, whose work is drudgery, whose wages is death, and that eternal, Rom. vi. 23. Oh that the eyes of poor sinners were opened, to see the miserable slavery and bondage in which they are! Surely then they would flee to JesusChrist for freedom and redemption. I deny not that sin and corruption doth remain, yea, work and stir in the very best, after they are renewed and sanctified by the Spirit of God, but they hate and loath their sins, yea, pray and strive against them, and are never satisfied, till they are utterly subdued and vanquished. But, in the unconverted, sin doth reign and play the tyrant, so that they are under the power and dominion thereof, yielding a willing subjection. Their lust no sooner bids them go, but they run, yielding up themselves to be servants of unrighteousness; and sometimes are content to be at a great deal of cost and pains for the satisfying of their filthy lusts.

3. 'Thou art under the damnation of sin.' Though thou art not actually roaring in hell flames with the devil and damned, yet, thou art liable thereunto; and, if by some unexpected providence, thou shouldst be taken hence in thine unconverted state (which for aught thou knowest, may befal thee this night) thou hast no hope of escaping the damnation of hell, but will most assuredly be cast into that lake of fire and brimstone, *where is* nothing but *weeping and gnashing of teeth*, and that to all eternity. Eccles. xi. 9. Solomon, speaking to the young man who was much addicted to his sensual lusts and pleasures, saith, by way of scorn and derision, 'Rejoice in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes.' As if he had said, Do what thou pleases, deny not thyself any thing which thine heart can desire, take thy fill of pleasure; 'but know thou, for all these things, God will bring thee into judgment.' That is, for thy mispent youth and all those sensual pleasures wherein thou takest so much content and delight, thou shalt perforce be brought before Christ's judgment-seat at the last and great day; and there receive the dreadful sentence of condemnation, and then be hurried by devils out of Christ's presence, and dragged into hell, never, never to return again. Ah sinner! might thy torments there have an end, after so many millions of years, as there are stars in the firmament, hairs on thy head, or sands on the sea-shore, the consideration thereof

would administer some comfort to thee; but, the thought of *everlasting torment* is the very hell of hell. O the folly and madness of many men, who from day to day, and year to year, do put off their reformation and amendment; yea, spend their days in mirth and jollity, as if they were in no danger, though they walk upon the very brink of hell! Know, O young man, that so long as thou livest and continuest impenitent, in thy wicked and ungodly course of life, there is but a step betwixt *thee* and *eternal destruction;* for thou hangest over the very mouth of hell, by the rotten thread of thy life, which may soon be snapt asunder; and then what can be expected, but an irrecoverable downfal into hell?

Thus much for the setting forth the miserable condition of such as continue in their sinful courses, upon a conceit, that they have time enough before them to repent in; whereon I have somewhat the longer insisted, thereby to startle and awaken all *unconverted sinners* out of their carnal security, to a lively sense and apprehension of the *dreadful danger* they are in, so long as they live and lie in their *sins unrepented of.*

I shall close this last objection, by removing those encouragements, which may plead for the delaying their amendment, and reformation.

1. Taken from that noted place in Ezek. xviii. 21. 'But if the wicked will turn from his sins that he hath committed, and keep all my statutes, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall surely live, he shall not die.' Whence some have inferred, that at what time soever a sinner doth repent of his sins, he shall be received to mercy; and thereupon have deferred their repentance till it hath been too late.

Ans. 1. 'The text affirmeth no such thing; but only, that whosoever truly turneth from all his sins, and sincerely endeavoureth to walk in the ways of God's commandments, he shall surely live, and not die.' So that, the place truly understood, gives no encouragement to any to put off their repentance to their old-age or death-bed; for what time have they then to express the sincerity of their *repentance*, by their godly lives and conversations? If the conditions of the text be well weighed and considered, they will fright men from that folly and madness.

2. 'Although it be true, that whensoever a wicked man truly repenteth, he shall be pardoned; yet, he cannot truly repent whensoever he will;' repentance not being in his own power, but the free gift of God, which he seldom bestoweth on those in their old age, who have neglected it all the former part of their lives: and he that refuseth to turn when God calleth him, provoketh God to give him over to the hardness of his own heart, so that he cannot turn.

II. Another encouragement is taken from the *mercy of God.* God, say they, is merciful and gracious, yea, rich in mercy,

whose arms are ever open to receive all poor sinners who come unto him; and therefore we hope to find mercy at last, though we never sought it before.

Ans. 1. True it is, God is merciful, yea, abundant in mercy, but to whom will he extend his mercy? Surely, to poor penitent sinners, who, in truth turn from their sins, and devote themselves to him and his service: but, thou who delayest and puttest off thy repentance from time to time, must not expect to partake one drop thereof. Though the Lord be ready to embrace all poor penitent sinners in the arms of his mercy; yet, 'He will wound the head of his enemies, and the hairy scalp of such an one as goeth on still in his trespasses,' putting off his repentance from day to day, Psal. lxviii. 21.

2. 'Know, that as God is rich in mercy, so likewise abundant in truth; and will shew no mercy to sinners in a way derogating from his truth.' Now, as God hath promised in his *word*, to receive such into his *favour*, who, without delay will turn from their sins unto him, and keep his statutes, Ezek. xviii, 22. So, in his *word* hath he threatened destruction to such as put off their *repentance*, when he calls upon them to turn, as Prov. i. 24. Every word of God will certainly have its accomplishment. When therefore, thou presumest on the *mercy of God*, remember withal, that he is a *God of truth;* and, as sure as God is true, thou wilt perish for ever, notwithstanding God is merciful: 'For all the ways of the Lord are mercy and truth, unto such as keep his covenant and his testimonies,' Psalm xxv. 16.

3. 'Know that God is just as well as merciful, and will by no means clear the guilty.' As he hath prepared heaven for some, so hell for others; and it is very just that such should be cast into hell, who will not *accept* of heaven upon God's terms, by a speedy turning from their *sins*, and *giving* up *themselves* to him. Thou therefore, who blessest thyself with a false persuasion of God's mercy, and thereupon runnest on in a *course of sin*, know, that thereby thou dost *deceive* thine own soul; for thou wilt at last find that the Lord is just as well as merciful; just in executing his wrath upon obdurate and wilful sinners, as well as merciful in receiving poor penitent sinners into favour. As God, to shew the riches of his mercy, converts some in their elder years; so, to shew the glory of his justice, he leaves others (and those the greatest part) to die in their sins.

4. 'It is a mercy that sinners can never enough admire, that, upon repentance, they may be received into favour; but it is a wicked perverting this mercy of God, if, instead of leading us to repentance, it should encourage us to defer the same from day to day.' Because God is merciful, shall we be so ungrateful, as thereupon to run on in a course of sinning against him, presuming on his mercy to the last? Because God is gracious, shall we there-

upon prove the more ungracious and rebellious against him, and his commandments? That be far from us. Yea, rather, seeing the Lord is merciful and gracious, let us be the more ashamed to sin against so good and gracious a God. Let not the mercy of God occasion us to take any encouragement to sin against him; but rather, let the consideration thereof be an effectual argument to prevail with us speedily to turn from our sins unto *him*, and walk in the ways of holiness. Surely, if there were any ingenuity in us, *his* love to us would constrain us to love *him* again; *his* mercy to us would work in us both a care to please *him*, and a fear to offend *him*.

III. 'Another encouragement is taken by many from the patience and long-suffering of God, because he long bears with them in their wicked and ungodly courses, not executing his wrath upon them.' Eccles. viii. 10. 'Because sentence against an evil work, is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.' Because the Lord is slow in executing vengeance on wicked men, therefore are their hearts exceedingly hardened in their sinful ways, so that they go on impenitently therein, abusing the long-suffering of God unto presumption; which should have led them to repentance: but know, that though the Lord doth bear long with some sinners, yet not with all. How many have we known in our own experience have been suddenly surprized, and cut off in the very act of sin, not having so much time and strength as to say, *Lord have mercy on me?* And assuredly, the slower God is in striking, the heavier will be his strokes; the curse and wrath of God, for thy going on still in thy trespasses, will be more grievous on thee at the last.

IV. Another encouragement is taken by many from the example of the 'converted thief on the cross,' who had spent all the former part of his life in wickedness and profaneness.

Arg. 1. 'It is a single example of extraordinary mercy, there being not one more in all the Bible.' It is the saying of St. Austin, *Unus misericordiam invenit hora ultima, ne quis desperet & unicus ne quis praesumat.* That one was received to mercy at the last hour, that none should despair; and but one, that none should presume: For this one man that repented at the last, many thousand instances might be brought of such, who putting off their amendment from day to day, have at last perished in their sins. What folly then must it needs be in any, to put himself in a way wherein so many have miscarried!

2. 'Christ wrought this rare miracle of mercy upon an extraordinary occasion; namely, to honour the ignominy of his cross.' When his human nature was lowest, then would he manifest the power of his divine nature; whereby Christ shewed what he could do, not what ordinarily he would do. And being an extraordinary act of Christ's mercy and power, it can make no general

rule: What ground of hope then can this afford to thee, who wilfully spendest thy youth and younger years in the service of sin and Satan, in hopes to find mercy at the last?

3. 'Though the thief's repentance was late, even at the close of his life; yet, it was so soon as he heard of Christ:' For it doth not appear, he either saw or heard of him before; whereas thou hast often heard of Christ in the ministry of the word; yea, been called and invited to cast away thy sin, and to cast thyself upon him, to come unto Christ that thou mightest be saved, and yet hast slighted and rejected his gracious invitations, and quenched the good motions of his Spirit; therefore thy case is far different from his.

4. 'Though the thief continued in his wicked and ungodly course of life to the last, and then became a true convert; yet can it not be proved that he purposely put off his repentance to that day.' But questionless he persisted in his sinful ways to the hour of death, through ignorance, and not through wilfulness, whereas thou designest to follow thy sinful lusts and pleasures all thy life long, at least the best and greatest part thereof, and then at the last to resign up thyself to God and his service: Therefore his late repentance can be no ground of encouragement unto thee, who wilfully resolvest to go on in thy wicked courses so long as thou hast time and strength.

CHAP. VI.

Containing Directions suitable to Young Men.

HAVING answered the *objections* of some young men against their early serving of God, I come now to give you some *directions suitable to your state and condition.*

I. 'Labour to be well rooted and grounded in the principles of religion,' otherwise you will soon be 'carried away with every wind of doctrine,' and so made a prey to every seducer. Observe who they be that are easiest seduced by *Papists*, *Quakers* and *false teachers*, and you will find that they were such who were never well-grounded in the principles of religion, Eph. iv. 14. They are said to be 'children in understanding, who are tossed to and fro, and carried away with every wind of doctrine;' implying, that weak and ungrounded Christians are aptest to embrace every false and erroneous doctrine; whereas the *martyrs* being well grounded in the principles of religion, could not be removed from the truth by all the arguments of the most learned *doctors*. As therefore thou wouldest be preserved from all erroneous doctrine and damnable heresies, labour in the use of all

means that God hath sanctified, that thou mayest be well rooted and grounded in the truth. To that end,

I. 'Learn some good and sound catechism.' If thou canst not get it by heart, then read it over again and again. Thou mayest read and hear much, and yet never attain to a well-grounded knowledge in religion, till thou hast been well instructed in the principles of it. This is what the apostles well knew: therefore they delivered to their several churches a *form of doctrine*, which contained the fundamental principles of religion, which every member thereof was perfectly to learn, Rom. vi. 17. 2 Tim. i. 13. Heb. v. 12. and vi. 1. Whosoever shall think to attain to any sound knowledge in religion, merely by hearing the word preached, before he be well-grounded in the principles thereof, will find it a hard work, and understand by his experience how necessary the laying a good foundation is to his building up faith and holiness.

2. 'Take all opportunities of reading the writings of godly, learned men, who by their labours have cleared the main and principal points of religion:' And amongst the many books now extant, be sure you rather make choice of such as do soundly inform the judgment, and work powerfully upon the heart and affections, than of such as, containing a little, but frothy conceits of wit, do only please the fancy with fruitless flashes.

3. 'Especially be frequent in reading the holy scriptures,' which contain not only the principles of religion, but also all necessary truths to be known and practised: Yea, as David speaketh, Psal. cxix. 105. *Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.* It giveth wisdom to the simple, and to the young man knowledge and discretion. For this, Timothy is commended, 'That he had known the scriptures from his childhood,' 2 Tim. iii. 15.

II. 'Return to the Lord:' Repent, and be converted to God. *Conversion* being so great and necessary a duty, and so especially included in that *remembering of our Creator* required in the text, I shall insist a little the more distinctly upon it, and shall 1*st*, Open the nature of it; and 2*dly*, Press thee to it.

1. For the nature of conversion it is 'turning or coming back to the Lord.' Sin is our departing or going away from God: Impenitence in sin is our keeping away from him. Conversion is our return, or coming back to God; it is our coming back,

1. From unbelief to the faith in God,

2. From our enmity and rebellion, unto friendship and obedience to God.

1. 'It is our coming back from unbelief to faith in God. Every convert is become a believer. The unconverted world are all concluded in unbelief, Rom. xi. 32. In conversion we are fetched out from that wretched multitude of *unbelievers: converts* and *believers* signify the same persons in scripture-sense.

This faith we are converted to, comprehends in it three things.

1. Our sealing to the truth of God.
2. Our adventuring upon the truth of God.
3. Our resigning ourselves to the government of the truth.

1. 'Faith is our sealing the truth of God,' or our unbelief of the truth of the word of God, John iii. 33. 'He that believeth hath set to his seal that God is true.' It is our belief of the truth of the scriptures in general, and in special of the truth of the gospel. It is our sealing to Christ, or our believing that he is the Messiah of God, the Saviour of the world; that this is the Stone that is laid in Sion, on whom 'whosoever believeth shall not be confounded,' 1 Pet. i. 6. 'That in him there is salvation, and none other,' Acts xii.

2. 'Faith is our adventuring upon the truth of God,' an adventuring *our lives*, and adventuring *our souls* upon the truth of the word of God, and upon that Jesus, concerning whom this *word bears witness*. Faith is an adventuring for the other world. The object of faith are *things not seen*, Heb. xi. 1. that is, the invisible world. The scripture tells us of another state, a more blessed and glorious state than that we here are in: This blessed state is the other world, which however it cannot now be seen, yet faith hath such evidence that there is such a state, that it will adventure for it.

Believers are *merchants*, Matth. xiii. 45. *merchant-adventurers*, that will adventure all they have, their whole stock and patrimony, for the riches of that good land. *Believers* are adventurers for the other world, and they trust their whole adventure with Christ, he shall be their pilot, yea, he shall be their Ark, to bring them into the *holy land* above.

Whither art thou bound, O believing soul! for Canaan, for Jerusalem, which is above? I am bound for heaven. But art thou sure that there is such a place as heaven, and such blessedness there? So sure I am, that I will adventure all upon it. But who is it shall bring thee to heaven? Jesus of Nazareth; he who suffered, the just for the unjust, that he might bring us to God. But God is angry with thee, thou art a guilty creature, and by thy sins hast fallen under his wrath and displeasure; how wilt thou do for that? Why, I will trust Christ for that, he shall be my propitiation, he shall make peace for me, and he will do so, 1 John ii. 2. Oh, but thou art an unclean and polluted creature, and there is no *unclean thing* can enter into that holy land; how wilt thou do for that? I will trust Christ for that also, he shall be my *sanctification*, and he will be so, 1 Cor. i. 30.

3. Faith comprehends under it the resigning up ourselves to the government and guidance of the truth of God, our actual living under the power of truth; not only our holding the truth, but suffering the truth to take hold of us, to rule and order us in our whole course: It is the same state that *both* are in, both those that *believe not the truth*, and those that *obey not the truth*. Faith is not

only a resting on Christ as a Saviour, but a resigning ourselves to him as our Lord and King. Thou sayest thou dost *believe* the gospel, but wilt thou *obey the gospel?* Hath it gotten the command and government of thee? Is thy life a life of obedience to the faith? If sin and the devil have still the government of thee, and thou livest under the power of the flesh, it will no way avail thee to say, *I believe in Christ.* But of this more in the next particular.

4. 'Conversion is our return from our enmity and rebellion against God, into friendship and obedience unto God, our coming in and laying down arms.' The ungodly world are all in arms against God, they are rebels against the Almighty, their word is the same with these *heathens* words, Psal. ii. 3. 'Let us break his bands asunder, and cast away his cords from us.' The root of this rebellion is enmity that is in their hearts against God, Rom. viii. 7. 'The carnal mind is enmity against God.' Sinners are enemies against the being of God; they would be glad if there were now no God, none above them to restrain or punish them: 'The fool hath said in his heart there is no God,' Psal. xiv. 1. How glad would that fool be, if he was sure his heart said true, if he was sure there was no God indeed! They are enemies against the sovereignty of God, against his rule and government; they all say in their hearts concerning the Father, as those Jews said concerning the Son, 'We will not have him to reign over us; they are enemies to all the holy ways of God,' Col. i. 21.

Now, in conversion the enmity is slain, and thereby the rebellion subdued: 'You who were sometimes alienated, and enemies in your mind by wicked works, hath he now reconciled,' Col. i. 12. A sincere convert is a soul reconciled. Reconciliation between God and man is of both parts; the reconciliation of man to God stands in a cessation from enmity, a subduing of his rebellion, and his returning into friendship and allegiance. Sinners love not God, nor any thing that belongs to God; their enmity is against him, and all his; against his *word*, *worship*, and all his *ways;* they love neither his *laws*, nor his *promises;* neither his *works*, nor his *ways*. God promises and rewards with spiritual and eternal blessings, but what is this to a *carnal mind!* He must have *money*, *meat* and *drink*, *fine clothes*, and *pleasures;* these *locusts* he likes, but hates God's *Manna*.

A *convert* is so reconciled to God, that he loves and likes all that is of God, he likes his crown and his cross, his comforts and his commands, all that God gives, and whatever he requires. He loves to be and to do whatever God will have him: A strict, holy, and obedient life, a life of care and labour, in all things to please the Lord, that is a life he loves: not only the life he commends and praises in others, but it is the life he loves to live.

There be many that are no *converts*, that come thus far, to be able to say, 'For my part, I have nothing to say against godliness,

I think well of it, it is an honest way and the safest way; I wish well to the power of religion; it were well if there were more of it found in the world.' Ay, but as much as thou speakest for it, and as well as thou lovest it, thou wilt have but little to do with it thyself; thou lovest strictness, but thou wilt not be strict thyself; thou praisest the close and laborious Christian, but canst not bear and endure that labour and care thyself. Is this thy reconciliation to God? Mistake not thyself, every *sincere convert* is so reconciled to all the ways of God, that these are the ways, this is the life which he chuses for himself, a life of obedience to the whole will of God; this is the life he loves and lives.

By what hath been said, thou mayest understand what *conversion* is, and so what it is I am now exhorting thee to.

II. 'I shall now press thee to be converted, and turn to the Lord: And shall I need to use arguments to persuade thee? I doubt there may be need enough: How hardly are sinners persuaded unto God! They will after the devil easily enough, but how few are they with whom all the arguments imaginable will not prevail to bring them to God?

CHAP. VII.

Containeth two Arguments to Conversion.

I SHALL make use of two arguments in this matter; 1. Thy *necessity*. 2. Thy *commodity*.

1. Thy necessity, methinks, should prevail with thee? A necessity is laid upon thee to turn to the Lord, and woe to thee if thou turn not; thou must turn or die, Matth. xix. 9. *Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.* Necessity is a mighty argument to persuade any thing. What is there but necessity will persuade men to? Sinners will make use of this argument to persuade themselves to, and excuse and justify themselves in any wickedness. We shall hear them sometimes saying, 'If I have stolen, it was for my necessity; If I have lied, or swore falsely, it was upon necessity, I was forced upon it.' And when they have said this, 'It was my necessity brought me to it,' they think they have said enough to justify themselves.

This argument of *necessity* hath great place in the present case, it is of necessity that thou must be converted: for 1. 'It is necessary that thou live, that thou secure thine own being, and the blessedness thereof; that thy soul be so looked to, that it be not left to die and perish for ever.' This is of the highest necessity for every man to look to it, that he go not down into the infernal pit. It is not necessary to be *rich* in this world to have great *houses*, fine

clothes, costly *fare*, and many *friends;* to be in health, to live in credit and prosperity in the world ; thou mayest be happy without all this. There is many an honest poor man, who hath lived comfortably and contentedly, that hath scarce been worth a groat besides his labour, and it may be hath scarcely had *one friend* in the world to relieve him. But it is necessary to keep thee out of hell, and thy soul out of the hands of the devil ; this is *more necessary* than to have a being; better thou hadst never been born, than at last to be damned.

2. 'It is necessary to be converted, that so thou mayest live.' Thou diest without remedy, thou diest without mercy, if thou turn not, Ezek. xviii. 31, 32. *why will ye die? Turn and live.* Intimating, that it is impossible but men must perish everlastingly, if they turn not ; *Except ye repent, ye shall perish*, Luke xiii. 3.

Sinners will sometimes acknowledge and say, 'It would be well for me if I could mind my soul ; it would be well for me if I could repent of my sins, if I could leave this drunkenness, or this company-keeping, or this covetousness ; it would be well for me, if I could bring my heart to it, to leave off this carnal course of life, and give myself to Christianity and godliness.' It would be well for thee : Why, is that all thou hast to say, 'to turn to God?' Why, man, it is necessary for thee: A necessity is laid upon thee ; and woe be unto thee if thou turn not. If thou wert in extreme poverty, and hadst not bread to eat, nor house to dwell in, nor friends to relieve thee ; or if thy house were all on fire over thy head, would such a cold or low expression suffice to set out thy case : 'It would be well for me if I could get bread, or house, or friend to relieve me ; It would do well for me if I could get out of my house ere the fire devour me? No, thou wouldst then cry out of thy necessity or thy extremity : I starve, I am ready to perish for want ; I shall be burnt to ashes if I fly not out of my house.

Escape for thy life, sinner, thy soul starves, it dies, is like to burn for ever in the bottom of hell. Oh! it is necessary for thee to get thee out of this fearful case: why lingerest thou? Haste thee, haste thee, let the extremity of the danger and misery thy soul is in, press thee to make a sudden escape ; thy case will not bear delays, fly for thy life, fly unto Christ, and live.

II. 'Thy commodity or profit persuades thee to turn to the Lord.' Commodity is the great argument of the *thrifty world ;* that puts them upon all their labours. What will not men undertake and endure for their commodity? This chooses their habitation, builds their houses, plants their orchards ; this animates trade, and is the encouragement and reward of all the labours and profit that is expected to come in by them.

Why now, sinner, consider, godliness is the great profit, *it is profitable to all things*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. There is nothing truly profitable besides. Sinners count that godliness is good for nothing,

unless to make men proud and conceited. Fools cry out with those, Job xxi. 15. 'What is the Almighty that we should serve him? and what profit shall we have if we pray unto him?' They count that is the only thing that stands in the world: They think they might get more and thrive better, if it were not for this *godliness;* this *conscience* hath been many a man's undoing. How many a man is there that hath lost a good living, because he would keep a good conscience? If it were not for this *conscience*, men might get not only by honesty, but by fraud and violence: lying or false-swearing, might then bring in many a penny, but *godliness* pares off all that gain.

But yet whatsoever fools think, *godliness is great gain*, 1 Tim. vi. 6. It is our only profit. Nothing can truly be counted our profit, but that which is, or contributes to our happiness. Wilt thou call that thy profit, which when thou hast it, thou art like to be never the better for it? neither the honester man, nor the happier man? Nothing can be counted our happiness, or conducing to it, but that which either will abide by us, or do us good when it is gone. Holiness will abide by us, and the exercises of holiness will do us good when they are over and past. In such times, when through sickness and weakness, or some other invincible hindrance, we cannot pray, or hear, or labour in the work of our soul, it will then be a great comfort to us, that we have prayed, heard, and laid up against such a time of need, when we had ability. The fruits of praying will remain, and the very remembrance of our faithfulness to God will be a comfort to us in our greatest weaknesses and distresses. Sinners, when their estates are gone, their labours are done, their pleasures are over; then they will know whether these things are happiness or no.

This getting life, this merry life, which thou now blessest thyself in, will not last always with thee, and when it is gone, then thou wilt see how wise a man thou wert in promising thyself happiness in such things as these. 'Where is the hope of the hypocrite, though he hath gained, when God shall take away his soul? Job xxvii. 8. Thy soul, man, thy soul must be gone; the time is at hand, when God will take away thy soul, and lay it in the dark for ever: and when that day comes, where then will thy gains be? 'What shall it profit a man to win the whole world, and lose his own soul?' Matth. xvi. 26.

Young man, what art thou for? Art thou for profit? Wilt thou study thine own commodity? Wilt thou count that thy profit which will make thee the honester man, and the happier man? Wouldest thou get something to comfort thee when thou art old? Wouldest thou be really happy? Then go to God, join thyself to him, give thyself to him, to be his servant for ever: Get the Lord to be thy portion, and then thou mayest say, 'Return to thy rest, O my soul, for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with me,' Psal.

cxvii. 7. Wilt thou now, young man, take these arguments and urge them home upon thy heart? Stand in the presence of God, and in his fear reason thus with thyself, Why should I not now become a sincere convert to God?

1. 'Is not there a necessity laid upon me?' Must I not either turn or die? Is it not necessary for me to look to the salvation of my soul? and is there any way for that, but turning from my sins? My flesh pretends necessity for my serving of it? I must have bread, I must have clothes, I must have money? I am sure these things are necessary for me, for I must not starve. Ay, but is there not an higher necessity here? Whether I have bread or no, whether I starve or no, I must look to it, that I be not damned for ever: *Skin for skin, and all that a man hath will he give for his life*, Job ii. 4. Ay, I but skin and flesh, and bone and life, and all must go, rather than lose my soul. If I can live and maintain myself here in an honest way, it must be done. If I can be a rich man and a good Christian, a wealthy man and a godly man, it is well enough. But whether I be rich or poor, I must have Christ and life, and Christ I cannot have without turning from my sins to him.

What, O my soul! art thou such an enemy to godliness, that thou wilt rather die than become a godly man? Art thou so in love with a carnal and earthly life, that thou wilt sell thyself to the devil, rather than change thy course? Will thy necessity prevail nothing with thee? Thou art in necessity, O my soul, in necessity of Christ, in necessity of *pardon*, in necessity of *grace* and *holiness*: Thou art ready to perish, a slave to lust, a slave to the devil; these tyrants are thrusting thee down to the eternal prison, thou art in necessity of Christ: there is no hope of escaping, but by getting thee into Christ.

2. 'Would it not be for my profit to turn?' How can I spend my time to better advantage, than by making the everlasting kingdom sure to me? Whom dost thou, O my soul, count to have been wise men, and the best of husbands in the world, whose care, and whose labour have best turned to account? Either those who have gotten oil into their lamps, that have been sowing to themselves in righteousness, that have been laying up to themselves *treasure* in *heaven*: or they that have had their *occupation* wholly about this *earth*, or else loitered their time in *mirth* and *idleness?* Which of these two sorts dost thou think are best provided for? Whose *harvest* or *vintage* is like to be the most plentiful and blessed? However thou judgest now in this *sowing-day*, yet when the *reaping-day* comes, then in which of the two cases would thou be, of those who have sown in *righteousness* and reap in *mercy*, or of those which have sown in the *flesh* and reap *corruption*, who have sown in *iniquity*, and must reap in *wrath and fire?* Would it not be more to thy profit, to reap with the *righteous* and *godly*, than with the *wicked* and *ungodly?* 'Why, does the case

stand thus? Is it both necessary and profitable for me to be a sincere convert to the Lord? Come my soul, away with all excuses, away with all delays; come in this day, and yield thyself to the Lord; come, and give thyself, come join thyself to him in a perpetual covenant, that shall never be forgotten.

CHAP. VIII.

Containeth a Direction to young Men, how to get a Stock of Grace.

III. 'AT thy first setting up, content not thyself with a competent stock of money to begin in the world withal; but be sure likewise to get a good stock of grace.' Thou art to drive two trades together, a trade for thy body, and a trade for thy soul: and each trade must have its distinct stock, to be maintained upon. It is like to be but poor trading, where there is no stock to begin upon. Thou mayest as well drive a trade for thy body without a stock of *money*, as a trade for thy soul without a stock of *grace*. Get a stock of *saving grace*, a stock of *faith* and *love*, and *habitual holiness;* on the wise improvement of this, thou wilt grow rich unto God. This is the true riches, the best riches, a little of it is more worth than all the world. For,

1. 'Riches oft prove hurtful to the owners of them,' Eccles. v. 13. 'There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun; namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt;' proving oftentimes occasions of sin unto them, being the *bellows of pride*, and the *fuel of lust*.

But *grace* always prove an exceeding great advantage to the owners thereof. Never any man suffered by having too much *grace*. It is good upon all accounts, for it sanctifies men's earthly riches, teaching them how to use and improve them to the glory of God, the good of others, and comfort of their own souls; yea, *grace* sanctifies not only blessings, but likewise crosses and afflictions, turning them to their good: 'For all things shall work together for the good of every gracious soul, or, every one that loves or fears God,' Rom. viii. 28. Whereupon saith the apostle, 2 Cor. iv. 17. 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

2. 'Worldly riches are uncertain, they make to themselves wings, and fly away,' Prov. ii. 3, 5. Sure it is, that within a short time, either they will be taken from us, or we from them; either they will leave us, or we must leave them; yea, they are such slippery ware, that the harder we grasp them, the sooner they will slip out of our hand.

Whereas grace is a blossom of eternity, which will abide with

us for ever.' It doth not only continue with us so long as we live here, but endureth with us to all eternity, therefore called *durable riches*, Prov. viii. 18.

I know, some tell us of falling away from grace. True it is, a Christian may lose it.

1. 'The comfortable sense and feeling of grace,' so that in his own apprehension it may be truly lost.

2. 'He may lose some degree of saving grace;' for faith is sometimes more lively and strong, and sometimes more dull and weak; yea, all graces have their full and wane, their ebbing and flowings.

3. 'He may lose the powerful operation of grace;' I mean, the acts of *faith*, and other graces may be intermitted and suspended; when the graces themselves are not abolished, but continue with us for ever.

In which respects, you may discern the transcendent excellency of *grace* above riches.

How should the consideration hereof prevail with you to labour in the use of all means God hath sanctified for the attainment thereof.

To help you therein, take these directions.

1. 'Mourn and weep (if possible) for thy graceless condition;' take up a lamentation, and say, 'Woe and alas that ever I was born, especially since I have lived thus long in a graceless condition, without God and without Christ in the world! O what will become of me if I die in this state! surely hell and damnation must needs be my portion to all eternity.' Thus make thy closet a *house of mourning;* and know, that the mourning of thy soul will cause the yearning of God's bowels towards thee, so that he will not deny grace to a mourning soul.

2. 'As thou wouldst have grace, frequent the means of grace;' I mean, the ministry of the word, that being the ordinary instrument whereby the Spirit of God, who is the principal author of grace, doth convey grace into the heart of sinners. Whereupon the apostle Peter affirms, 1 Pet. i. 23. 'That we are born anew, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God.' Where, by being *born anew*, is meant such a thorough change in us, whereby we are brought out of the state of nature into the state of grace, and so are made new creatures, having an infusion of new and holy habits, or supernatural grace put in our hearts; which blessing is ordinarily wrought in us through the ministry of the word. Acts ii. 41. we read of three thousand sinners who had grace wrought in their souls by one sermon: Yea, Acts x. 44. *Whilst Peter was preaching, the Holy Ghost fell on all them that heard the word.*

And therefore, O *young man*, as thou desirest *true saving grace*, frequent the ministry of the *word*, take all occasions of hearing

the same, both *in season and out of season;* and for thy encouragement know, that as graceless and profane hearts as thine have been sanctified by the Spirit of God, as they have been attending upon the ministry of the word: and who knows, but thou mayest find the same effect of the word on thy soul, whilst thou art waiting upon it?

3. 'Beware thou neglect not the day of grace.' There are certain seasons of grace when the Lord makes tenders and offers of grace to the souls of poor sinners: yea, there is no man that lives in the *bosom* of the church, but probably he hath his *critical day*, a certain time for grace, which, if he neglect, it is a question whether ever it will be offered to him again. Happy therefore, and thrice happy are they who observe those seasons of grace; and know in their day the things that concern their everlasting peace.

Now it may be God speaks home to thy conscience; now he warms thy heart, and puts thereinto good purposes and resolutions. It will be therefore thy wisdom, carefully to observe and improve the same to thy soul's advantage, not suffering them carelessly to pass away, lest thou lose the benefit of those blessed mansions, lest thou lose life and salvation for ever.

Luke xix. 41, 42. Our Saviour tells the Jews, they had a day of grace, which, because they slighted and neglected, they should *never* enjoy it again, the *means* of grace and salvation should be no more offered unto him. God being a just God, is it not just that he should reject them for ever, who have for a long time rejected him? That *he* should turn a deaf ear unto them, crying unto him on their death-beds for grace and mercy, who would not hearken unto him calling upon them in the day of his merciful visitation?

Whilst therefore the day of grace lasteth, whilst God stands knocking at the door of thine heart, by the motions of the Spirit, and admonitions of his ministers, speedily open to him, embrace his motions, be willing to follow the dictates of his Spirit in ways of obedience. Thou knowest not when the day of grace will end, though *some men's* day continue to their old age, some to the day of their death; yet, some men's *days of grace* may end in their youth and younger years. Thy *first day* may be thine *only day for heaven;* loiter out that, and henceforth it may be *night* with thee for ever. Therefore, O young man, how doth it concern thee to take the first and proper season! Now hearken, now accept and submit to mercy, now give thyself unto God, be his faithful servant, to obey and serve him with all thy heart, and thy strength, or the day may be lost, and thy soul lost for ever. 'Behold, now is the accepted time, now is the day of salvation.' Thou knowest not what a day may bring forth, thou mayest suddenly be taken from the means of grace, or the means of grace may be suddenly taken *from thee.* The sun of heavenly light, which now shineth, may

set, and thou be left in darkness; the gate of mercy, now open to thee, may be shut against thee; 'the things belonging to thy peace may be hid from thee.' There is a time coming, and we know not how near it is, in which (as Christ saith) 'many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able.' Luke xiii. 24. Oh what woeful yelling, what pitiful crying and earnest knocking, will there be then at the gate, with 'Lord, Lord, open to us:' but all in vain, having slighted and neglected their day of grace, when they should have got oil into their lamps, and grace into their hearts!

4. 'Be earnest with God in prayer, who is the God of all grace, that he would be pleased to vouchsafe unto thee his holy sanctifying Spirit;' which may quicken thy dead soul, infuse the grace of life, and make thee partakers of his holiness, whereby thou mayest become a new creature. Beg of God, that he would not put thee off with the things of this world, but, together with his outward blessings; or, whether thou hast them or not, that he would bless thee with spiritual blessings in Christ Jesus; and, that he would enrich thee in the inner man, with his saving and sanctifying grace. What the apostle James saith of wisdom, is true of all grace; *If any man lack it, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him*, James i. 5.

O young man! may grace be had for asking? Ask, and ask again, never keep silence, nor let fall thy suit till thou hast obtained. And in thy prayers, plead that gracious promise, Isa. xliv. 3. *I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and water upon the dry ground.* That is, where there is no sap of grace nor moisture of goodness; upon such saith the Lord, *will I pour out my water, my living water*, my grace shall flow down upon him, and his soul shall be as a well-watered garden.

Go therefore, thou poor sinful soul, who never yet to this day hadst one drop of grace within thee; go thou to the throne of grace, go thou to the fountain of grace, lament thy sinful barren heart before God, and plead his promise of *pouring the spiritual water of grace upon thy barren thirsty soul;* say unto him, 'Lord, make good this promise unto me, behold this dry and barren heart, upon which no dew or rain from above hath ever fallen; pity this hard and parched soul; a drop, a drop from the fountain of living water; God of grace, give grace unto me, and effectually work it in me.' And, know for thy comfort, that if God hath given thee a sense of the want of grace, and an heart to pray for it, it is a hopeful sign, that he intended to bestow it on thee.

5. 'Stir up in thy soul an earnest longing desire after grace.' To that end, consider the excellency thereof. Consider, I say, the excellency of grace; it is a beam of the divine nature, a spark and ray of glory, which puts such an excellency upon a person, that all others are vile persons in comparison of him. A gracious soul is the rarest piece of all God's workmanship, of more worth

than all the wealth and riches in the world. Nothing so graceth a man as grace doth, being the image of GOD in man, whereby he becomes like unto his Creator; which is the greatest excellency that can be conferred on a creature.

It was this that made all God's servants so famous in their generation. It was not their wealth, their parts, or the like; but their *graces*, their *faith*, their *patience*, their *zeal for God*, and the like; these keep their names fresh, when the names of wicked graceless wretches do rot and perish. Grace is *aromatical*, it embalms the living name of dead saints; whereupon a gracious person, when he dies, is said to carry a good conscience with him, and to leave a good name behind him.

I grant that carnal men, through their ignorance of the true worth of saints, being blind in spiritual matters, have a low and mean esteem of them; but, could they look in their inward parts, and discern their true worth, they would acknowledge them *all glorious within, more precious than fine gold.*

I shall close this direction, with a word to those who have some comfortable evidence of the truth of *grace* in their hearts, exhorting them, that they content not themselves with any measure or degree of *grace*, but labour and strive after perfection, adding *grace* to *grace*, and growing from one degree of *grace* to another, till they be perfect men and women in Christ Jesus. Though you ought to be content with a competency of worldly wealth, yet, you never talk of a competency of grace, nor take up with any degree of it already obtained; as if you had enough, and needed no more. St. Paul, though he was content with a little of the world, yet, not with a little of grace; 'He reached forward, and pressed toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Jesus Christ, Phil. iii. 24. 'It was the motto of Charles the V. *Plus ultra*, that is, *more yet*, or *further yet;* and it ought to be every Christian's motto, *Go on to perfection.*

To persuade you thereunto, take these arguments: 1. 'Hereby you will gain a comfortable evidence of the truth of grace in you;' for true grace hath this property, that though it be weak, yet it will grow and increase mightily: *As he that loveth silver, is never satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance with increase*, saith the wise man, Eccles. v. 10. so he that has true *grace* in him, will never think he has enough of it, but will be ever desiring and endeavouring after more. They who have once tasted of the *sweetness of grace*, are not satisfied with a little, the more they drink, the more they thirst, till they have drank their full draught in the kingdom of God. It may justly be doubted, whether there be any *truth of grace* where there is not a desire and endeavour after an increase therein; it is an ill sign, to sit down satisfied and rest content with a little. Sure, thou hast none at all, who art satisfied with a *little grace* thou thinkest thou hast.

2. 'To stir you up to labour after a greater measure and higher degree of grace, consider, that after the work of grace hath been wrought in you, there is a great deal more work to be wrought in you; many lusts to be conquered, much corruption to be subdued, many temptations to be resisted, many graces to be exercised, several duties to be performed, many of them hard and difficult to flesh, many great things to be done, and bitter things to be endured for Christ: You may be called to the fiery trial, and to suffer the loss of all that is dear unto you. How can you imagine to go through all these works with a small degree of grace, and measure of strength?

3. 'The stronger Christians you are, the more helpful will you be unto others that are weak and infirm, and consequently the more honourable; for it is more honourable to give than to receive.' Therefore, how doth it concern you, to strive to increase your store, that you may have by you to help the needy, and be useful in your generation, by instructing the ignorant, resolving the doubtful, comforting such as mourn, reproving such as are scandalous, converting such as are unconverted, strengthening such as are weak in grace. Oh, what a blessing might you be to all your relations; yea, to all with whom you do converse! How should the ears that heard you bless you; yea, and bless God for you! Job, ix. 11.

CHAP. IX.

Directions how to live a godly and gracious Life.

'BETAKE thyself to a godly and gracious life.' For thy help herein, take these directions:

I. *Direct.* 'At thy first awaking in the morning, lift up thine heart to God in a thankful acknowledgment of his mercy to thee in the night past, in giving thee such quiet rest and sleep, whereby thy body is refreshed, and thou enabled for the duties of the day.' And beg of God, that he would so assist thee with his grace and holy Spirit, that all the thoughts of thy heart, and the words of thy mouth, and works of thy hands, the day following, may be *acceptable in his sight.*

And in regard, the devil, at thy first awaking, is very watchful to take possession of thy heart, by casting in some wicked, worldly, wanton thoughts: it will be thy wisdom to prevent him, by fixing thy heart on some spiritual subject; as on God, his word or works, his providence or properties. Good thoughts in the morning will so season thy heart, that thou shalt retain the savour of such a gracious beginning all the day after.

II. 'So soon as thou art ready, before thou goest about the

works of thy calling, withdraw thyself to some private place, and there pour out thy soul unto God, by fervent and effectual prayer.' Be sure to open thy heart to God, before thou open thy shop to men. This secret prayer we find commanded by Christ himself, Mat. vi. 6. 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet; and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy father that is in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.' And we find that what he commandeth, himself practised: For, (Mark i. 35.) it is said, 'In the morning Christ went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.' How careful the servants of God have been therein, none will question, who are acquainted with the scriptures.

Besides all the benefits of prayer in general, secret prayer hath these:

1. 'It will be some testimony of the sincerity of thy heart.' A man may join in a public and family-prayer merely in hypocrisy, to gain the applause and commendation of men; but he that maketh conscience of praying in secret, and that in obedience to the command of God, with a desire to approve himself to *him*, hath some good evidence of the truth and sincerity of his heart.

2. 'It is in our secret prayers that God doth ordinarily give the greatest discoveries of his love.' Jacob met with a blessing when he wrestled with God in secret. As Cornelius was praying, 'a man in bright clothing, or an angel, appeared unto him, and said, Cornelius, Thy prayer is heard,' Acts x. 30, 31. When Peter was praying alone upon the house, *he saw a vision, and heard a voice from heaven speaking unto him,* Acts x. 2, 10, &c. The secrets of the Lord are usually revealed unto his people when they are seeking *him* in secret. Christ gives his sweetest kisses, and dearest embraces to his Spouse when she is alone.

Yet how is this duty of secret prayer generally omitted, especially by the younger sort of citizens, whose heads and hearts, and time, are so taken up with sensual pleasure and worldly business, that they can scarce allow themselves any time to spend with God in secret. Surely such do plainly demonstrate, that they love the world and the pleasures thereof, more than God himself. Nay, how can such say, that they love God at all in truth and sincerity, when they delight not in communion with Him, nor love to have any intercourse with him in secret.

O young men, that I might prevail with you, for the time to come, to be more constant in this duty; that you would not go into your shops, till you have been with God in private, and there offered up your morning-sacrifice of prayer and thanksgiving: I beseech you, for the sake of your precious souls, plead no excuse from worldly business. The devil and your own corrupt hearts will find many occasions to divert you from the duty;

but say to them as Abraham to his servants, 'Stay you here, while I go and worship the Lord yonder.'

Shouldst thou omit thy morning devotions for any worldly business, thou wouldst thereby hazard the loss of thy precious soul, for the gaining of a little worldly wealth, which can yield thee no true comfort. And 'what will this avail thee, to gain the whole world, and lose thine own soul?' Mark viii. 36.

Friend, let this my counsel be accepted of thee, and prevail with thee, set upon a constant course of serious secret prayer, or else never talk of Christianity or religion in thee; thou hast nothing of it. A Christian without prayer, is a man without breath: prayer is the very breathing of a Christian soul.

In the performing thy secret devotions, observe these rules:

1. 'Beware of doing them in a cursory, careless, and formal way.' He who serves God carelessly, is like to bring a curse upon himself instead of a blessing: For 'Cursed is he that doth the work of the Lord negligently,' Jer. xlviii. 10. So it is in the letter of the Hebrew, though the new translators of our Bible render it *deceitfully*, which two words may very well interpret one another: for he that doth a work *negligently*, doth it *deceitfully*, he doth it as if he would deceive God, but at last he deceives his own soul. Such prayers as are performed coldly and negligently, they are as if they had not been done on God's account, and a man is never the better for them; yea, he is the worse for such prayers, for they leave the heart more worldly and covetous, more hard and obdurate than it was before, and more guilty before God.

2. 'Let thy prayers be fervent, performed with earnestness of spirit and affection.' Set thyself in good earnest to seek the Lord, which is the only means to prevail with him, for 'it is the fervent prayer only that is effectual,' James v. 16. To this end be sure thou give not way either to drowsiness of body, or distraction of mind, unto which we are all naturally too prone; but stir up thyself to thy duty, putting forth all the strength thou canst therein. Though thy strength be but weakness, yet if thy strength be in the work, God will accept thereof.

As when a father sets his child about such or such a work, though the child be very weak and insufficient for the same, yet if it puts forth its strength therein, to do it as well as he can, the father will accept thereof, as if it were done after the best manner. So it is between God and *us;* though we are weak, and insufficient for the performance of *any spiritual duty*, yet if we put forth our strength therein, God will accept thereof.

Among other directions which might be given to drive away wandering thoughts in prayer, and so raise up thine affections therein, take notice of these two.

1. 'Make choice of such a place for the performance thereof, where thou mayest use thy voice and not be heard of others.'

The voice in prayer will be found very effectual, both to keep thy heart close to the duty, and to quicken thine affection therein.

1. 'If notwithstanding thou findest thy mind has been wandering in prayer after worldly matters, it will be a good course in thy closet-devotions, to pray those heads over again which thou deliveredst without any observation;' labouring, as to keep thy heart closer to the duty, so to perform it with more fervency and earnestness of affection.

CHAP. X.

Directions for the Manner of following thy particular Calling.

'HAVING thus begun the day with prayer, thou must then betake thyself to the duties of thy particular calling,' for particular callings are God's appointment, as for our own good, and the good of our family, so for the benefit of others.

In following whereof, have special regard both to thy *ends* and *manner* of performing them.

1. For thy *ends:* 'Follow not thy worldly business merely for gain or advantage, thereby to get an estate, but chiefly in obedience to the command of God,' (who requireth every one to labour in some honest calling) that thereby thou mayest serve, and follow his provision in the use of every means he has appointed for the getting a comfortable subsistence for thyself and family. And that thou mayest in some measure be profitable in thy generation, and serviceable to the public good; minding, above all things, the glory of God in what thou dost, who is glorified not only by the practice of holy and religious duties, but also by a conscionable performance of the duties of thy particular place and calling.

For the *following thy calling*, observe these rules.

1. 'Be diligent therein.' To live without a calling, or not to labour therein, are both sinful and unwarrantable. Every son of Abraham ought to mind some particular calling, by virtue of the command which God laid upon *man* immediately after his fall, Gen. iii. 19. 'In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread till thou return to the ground.' Which words are to be understood, not only as a curse or judgment, but also as a charge and command. Answerable thereunto is that precept in the moral law, 'Six days shalt thou labour.' So that no man hath a privilege to live idly, but either by the sweat of his *brow*, or of his *brain*, he ought to be serviceable in his generation.

For thine encouragement unto diligence in thy calling, Solomon tells thee, Prov. x. 4. *The hand of the diligent maketh rich*, and Prov. xiii. 4. *The soul of the diligent shall be made fat.* Whereas

idleness is the root both of beggary, and of all manner of wickedness, the devil's chiefest opportunity and advantage for tempting men unto sin, and therefore may be called the *hour of temptation.* For when the devil findeth men most idle, he will be sure to set them on his work; therefore it was good counsel which St. Jerom gave to one of his friends, 'Be thou always about some lawful business, that when the devil comes, he may not find thee idle.' If Satan at any time find thee not about that which is good, he will soon set thee about that which is evil.

Though thou must be diligent in thy calling, yet take these two cautions.

1. *Caution.* 'Beware of laying out the strength of thy heart and spirit upon thy worldly business, which ought to be reserved for communion with God.' Thou must so follow the works of thy calling, as one that hath other matters in thy head, businesses of an higher nature lying upon thee, even the great things of eternity, the salvation of thy precious and immortal soul. This the apostle intended in Cor. vii. 31. where he adviseth us, 'so to use the world, as if we used it not, or as not abusing it,' by such an immoderate loving, and inordinate seeking after it, as taking off the heart from a due minding the great concerns of our souls.

As Esau wasted his strength by overmuch hunting, and by his too greedy desire of Jacob's red pottage, lost his birth-right, Gen. xxvii. 29. so mayest thou by an over-eager hunting after wealth, waste the strength of thy body, and endanger thine heavenly inheritance. It will be therefore thy wisdom so to mind and follow after things *temporal*, that thou mayest not lose, no, nor abate thy care of things *eternal.*

I deny not, but the world may and must be minded by thee; but still in its place, secondarily, and subordinately. What is the world, to thy soul? What is *bread*, or *clothes*, or *money*, or an *house*, or *lands*, to the *everlasting kingdom?* Let that word be still in thine ears, and upon thy heart, whatever thou art about, 'First seek the kingdom of God.' First, that is, not only *before all things*, but chiefly, 'and above all things, seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness;' let thine heart be ever more intent upon God than upon all things in the world besides.

2. *Caution.* 'Though thou must be diligent in thy calling. yet beware that thy worldly business and employments do not engross thy whole time, but allow thy religious duties their proper and sufficient season.' Be sure thou observe thy praying and thy reading times, yea, and thy seasons for meditating on God, and communing with thine own heart. O let not thy *worldly employments* prove *heavenly impediments;* put not off thy serving God for thy earthly advantage whatsoever.

Haply thou wilt say, 'I must provide necessaries for my family, I must have bread for myself and them.' True, and must thou not

have grace and Christ too? Is not thy *soul* more than thy *body?* Is not *Christ* and *grace* more necessary than thy daily bread? If thou wilt not raise thy estate upon the ruins of thy soul, if thou wilt not sell thy hopes for hereafter for thy present commodity, and undo thyself for ever, for fear thou shouldst be undone here; then look to it, that (whatever wants) thy soul may have its due share of thy time. Let not thy holy duties give place to the world, let the world give place to them.

I know it is the practice of too many, upon a pretence of much business, either wholly to omit their private devotions, or else to run over them so hastily that they are lost in the doing: as good do nothing as nothing to the purpose. God will not be so put off nor can thy soul subsist upon the income of hasty duties. If thou wilt find no more leisure to pray, God will find as little leisure to answer.

2. 'Follow thy worldly business with an heavenly mind, as a citizen of heaven, and a pilgrim on earth.' Though thou hast thy hand on earth, yet let thine eye and thy heart be towards heaven, often meditating on heavenly things and 'set thy thoughts and affections in things above;' St. Paul, when he was at Rome *in his body*, yet was at *Coloss in the Spirit*, Col. ii. 5. So, though as yet we are *absent from heaven* in our bodies, yet in our spirit we may be, both searching in to the blessedness of that better country, and studying our way thither, and laying up treasure for ourselves there.

There is scarce any *worldly business* which calls for the continual intention of thy thoughts upon it, but some spare time may be gained from it for spiritual thoughts and heavenly meditations; and great care and watchfulness there should be, watchful against such an *over-intention of mind*, upon whatever earthly affairs shut the Lord out, and lay heaven under foot. Let our whole life be a *walking with* God, as Enoch's was, Gen. v. 22. Let us learn the skill to serve the Lord in our serving the necessities of our bodies; and let us often catch at opportunities for more immediate converses with him. Learn particularly these two things.

1. 'To spiritualize all outward objects and ordinances,' by raising matter of heavenly meditation from the same.

There is no creature in which there are not manifest footsteps of the *power*, *wisdom*, and *goodness of* God; every flower or spire of grass, every worm or fly, declares the *power*, of our *great* Creator; how much more the curious fabric of man's body and the *glorious host of heaven:* From each thou mayest take occasion to think of God with admiration. As *Christians* see all things in God, so may they see God in all things, and thereby make some spiritual use and improvement of them. He may with the bee suck sweetness out of every flower, not only for *sensual delight*, but also for *spiritual profit*. And truly the benefit of the *creature* is half lost,

if there be nothing but an *outward use* made of it. Brute beasts can behold the outward things; if man sees, and learns no more, what is his excellency above the beasts? A wise *physician* can extract some *good* out of those herbs ignorant persons cast away as useless. In like manner wise *Christians* can, and ought to extract some spiritual profit to themselves out of every creature which they behold, and every providence they meet with; by which blessed art of *heavenly chemistry* thou mayest both please thy fancy, and profit thine own heart.

2. 'In the midst of thy worldly business and employments often lift up thy heart to God in some short ejaculatory prayers; ask for his direction, assistance, and blessing on thy pains and endeavours, so to keep thee from the pollutions and defilements of this world; and that he would sanctify every dispensation of his providence unto thee, whereby thou wilt carry on the interest of thy soul with the concernment of thine estate.' These kind of prayers thou mayest send up to God at all times, in all places and company; yea, while thou art conversing with others about worldly matters, thou mayest *by these* converse with God, and hold communion with him, and that without any prejudice to thine *outward* business.

The Lord hath manifested his great approbation of these ejaculatory prayers by his gracious *answers* and *returns* thereunto. How graciously did God answer that ejaculatory prayer of David against Ahithophel's counsel, by defeating the same, and turning it into foolishness? 2 Sam. xv. 31. How graciously did God answer that ejaculatory prayer of Nehemiah, by inclining the heart of the king to send him to Jerusalem? Neh. ii. 4, 6. as also that of the penitent thief, 'Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.' Whereupon Christ said unto him, 'This day shalt thou be with me in paradise,' Luke xxiii. 42, 43. Yea, that ejaculatory Apostrophe of Moses to God, Exod. v. 22. 'Wherefore hast thou so evil intreated this people? had its gracious answer and return, chap. ix. 1. 'Then said the Lord, Now shalt thou see what I will do to Pharaoh. Ejaculatory prayers, though they are short and sudden, yet proceeding from the heart, may be as *fervent* and *prevalent* as solemn prayers. And indeed those frequently used, argue a heavenly mind, and an holy familiarity with God; but still beware that these short and occasional prayers be not made to serve thee instead of, and to shut out thy set and solemn duties. These will be of use to help thee in thy fixed duties, and may not excuse thee from them.

III. *Direct.* To young men, touching the manner of following their callings? 'Be just and honest in thy dealing with men, avoiding, as all guile and deceit, so all subtile equivocation and mental reservations, tending to the wronging thy neighbour;' that thou mayest be able to say with the apostle, Heb. xiii. 18. 'I trust I have

a good conscience in all things, willing to live honestly.' It is very observable, how plentiful the scripture is in pressing men to deal justly and honestly with all men, even in weights and measures, and that both in the Old and New Testament.

In the Old Testament, saith the Lord to his people, Lev. xix. 36. 'Just balances, just weights, as just ephah, and a just hin shall ye have. The *ephah* was a measure for dry things, as our *bushel* is; the *hin* was a measure for liquid things, as our *pottlepots* or *gallons*: Under these two names all other measures are comprehended, which God required should be *just* and *true*, without all falsehood and deceit. And, Deut. xxv. 13, 14, 15, 16. 'Thou shalt not have in thy bag divers weights,' of one kind he meaneth, 'a great and a small. Thou shalt not have in thy house divers measures, a great and a small,' one to buy with, another to sell with, or a greater to be shewn to the magistrate or officers, when they come to view the weights and measures. And ver. 15. 'But thou shalt have a perfect and a just weight, a perfect and a just measure shalt thou have. All that do such things, and all that do unrighteously (in what kind soever) are abomination to the Lord thy God.'

In the New Testament the apostles, in their exhortations, do much press upon God's people just and honest dealing one with another, as Rom. xii. 17. 'Provide things honest in the sight of all men.' The word in the Greek (*pronoou menoi*) is very emphatical and implies a forecasting care that they did nothing that was 'dishonest in the sight of men,' Phil. iv. 8. 'Whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are of good report, think of these things.' And Thess. iv. 6. 'Let no man go beyond or defraud his brother in any matter, because the Lord is the avenger of all such.' The apostle seems to anticipate the secure thoughts of the fraudulent's promising himself impunity, telling him, that 'the Lord is the avenger of all those who shall by any deceit defraud their brethren;' yet what abominable fraud and deceits are daily acted in matters of *commerce* and *trading*, between *neighbour* and *neighbour!*

CHAP. XI.

Setting forth several Frauds and Deceits too frequently acted in Commerce or Trade, with Rules to prevent them.

1. 'HOW many use all the arts they can, to make their wares look better and fairer than indeed they are, that so they may get more for their commodities than in truth they deserve?' which is one kind of deceit,

2. 'How many by lying and equivocating, do put off their bad ware at the highest price?' commending that for the best of the kind, which they know to be stark naught; and so sell their consciences with their commodities, for a very inconsiderable advantage? Surely those are sad gains, that make a man lose peace of conscience, and heaven at last.

3. 'How many are apt to work upon the unskilfulness and ignorance, or the necessity of the buyer?' If they find him unskilful in the commodity he is buying, how apt are they to work upon it, and to demand an unreasonable price of him, far above the worth of it? Or, if the buyer has more than ordinary need of such a commodity, how apt is the seller to take advantage of his urgent necessity, making him pay more for the same than it is really worth, which is cruel injustice?

Or when poor people expose their wares to sale, to buy bread for themselves and family, how many are there who take advantage of their necessity, offering them little more than their goods cost them? which is an high degree of oppression.

It is an evil rule, which some men take to be warrantable enough, 'to buy as cheap, and sell as dear as they can;' that is to wrong and over-reach, if they be able. And it is a poor shift they alledge, *viz. Caveat emptor*, 'Let the buyer look to himself.' Why that is no more but this, 'Let him count me a knave that he hath to do with, there is no trust to be given to me.' Is not this it thou sayest, and dost thou not herein say well for thyself?

4. 'How many do deceive their neighbours in weights and measures;' and yet take the full price for their commodities? Prov. xx. 10. 'Divers weights, and divers measures, both of them are alike abomination to the Lord.' As if he had said, Though men may make light of this kind of deceit, yet God abhors it.

5. 'How many use unjust and uncharitable courses to raise the ordinary price of their commodities, as by forestalling the market, or by engrossing commodities, that having all in their own hands, they may sell them at their own rates; which is a breach of *uncharitableness*, raising their gain out of their brother's loss.

6. 'How many buy goods that they know, or have just cause to suspect, are stole,' thereby making themselves accessary to the theft, and making thieves? If there were fewer receivers, there would be fewer thieves.

7. 'How many make gain by promise-breaking,' who will readily promise to pay at a day, but make no conscience of keeping their word or time, nor regarding how much their neighbour suffers by being disappointed at his day? Christians should be men of their words, consider before they promise, and then make conscience of punctual performances.

8. 'How many seek to put off all the bad money they can, though they know it to be bad, even for good wares?'

Perhaps you will say, You took it for good money; though you did, yet, except you can return it to the parties from whom you received it, it is a branch of deceit: Better it is to suffer wrong, than to do wrong in any kind. Because one hath wronged thee, will that be thy warrant to wrong another? Whatever palliations or pretences men may have, yet, the thing is palpable and injurious: Justice requires that there be an equal and true value betwixt the price and the commodity. When thou knowest the commodity thou buyest to be good, and the money thou payest for it to be naught, where is thy justice?

Thus you see what mysteries of iniquity there are in most trades, which are too well known, and too much practised by many tradesmen: For preventing of which, I shall briefly give you some few general rules to be observed in your dealings with men.

1. 'Ever observe that golden rule of our Saviour,' Mat. vii. 12. 'Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' As thou wouldst not have mixt ware sold thee for that which is pure, nor that which is sophisticated and naught, for what is perfect and good, do not thou offer the like to others; as thou wouldst not be wronged nor over-reached by others, do not thou go about to wrong or over-reach others; but 'whatsoever thou wouldst men should do to thee, do thou even so to them; for this is the law and the prophets;' that is, this is that which every book of the *law* and *prophets* require of us, this is the sum of that which in the *law* and *prophets* is delivered concerning our carriage and behaviour towards our neighbour.

2. 'When at any time thou art summing up thy gains and gettings, put all thy unrighteous gain in one scale, and thy soul, which thou hast by thine unjust and deceitful dealing exposed to sale for them, into the other; and withal, consider how light all those gains and gettings, are in comparison of thy soul.' And this, through God's blessing, may be a means to take thee off from all dishonest dealings: For what is the gain of many thousands, nay, of all the wealth in the world, to the loss of thy precious soul? Surely, all the wealth and riches in the world, can no more countervail the loss of one soul, than all the dirt of the street can countervail the loss of a rich jewel.

Young man, thou art now going forth into the world, and thine eyes and heart are set upon getting an estate, and gathering thee substance against the time to come; but beware thou lay not up an evil treasure, a treasure of *lies*, *oaths* and *deceit*, with thy treasure of *money* or *goods:* resolve from thy very first to have none by thee but honest gain: If God increase thee, bless him for it; but resolve rather to be poor, than not to be honest and upright; *For riches profiteth not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death*, Prov. xi. 4.

3. 'Consider, that all the ways and works of unrighteousness,

though acted never so secretly, and cunningly, shall one day be made manifest to all the world; for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil, Eccles. xii. 14. at the great day of judgment, whereof Solomon made mention before; all the ways and works of wickedness, all the deceit of men, though never so closely committed, shall be discovered to the view of all. And therefore, the *day of judgment* is called, Rom. ii. 25. *the day of revelation;* because then all the hidden things of dishonesty, all frauds and deceits shall be made manifest.

I shall close this direction, with giving you some few motives and arguments, unto just and honest dealing in your commerce with others.

1. 'Honest dealing is the likeliest way to thrive.' Look into the scriptures, and you shall find, that *righteousness*, as well as *godliness*, 'hath the promise of the life that now is, and that which is to come.' Promises of things temporal, as well as of things spiritual and eternal, 1 Tim. iv. 8. Though a righteous man have but a little estate, yet *that little is better than great revenues of the wicked and unrighteous*, Psalm xxxvii. 16. The unrighteous man, who hath got an estate by fraud and deceit, may fare more deliciously every day; but the righteous man may eat his meals with more true joy and contentment.

2. 'Just and honest dealing with men, will prove an honour and ornament to religion and profession.' Yea, there is nothing will grace religion so much in the eyes of all men, than for such who make profession thereof, to be just and honest, true and faithful in their dealings with others. This argument the apostle Peter uses, 1 Pet. ii. 12. 'Have your conversation honest among the Gentiles, that whereas they speak against you as evil doers, they may by your good works, which they shall behold,' (meaning such good works of honesty, as they by the light of nature knew to be *good works*) *glorify God in the day of visitation.*

3. Nothing doth more wound religion and dishonour the gospel, than when men professing godliness, are found unfaithful and dishonest in their dealings. Surely, never did religion suffer more dishonour and reproach, through the unjust and unrighteous actings of the professors thereof, than in these days: It cannot but grieve the heart of every *good man*, to hear that which is too truly laid to the charge of many professing godliness amongst us, namely, That there is more truth and faithfulness, more just and honest dealing to be found among *Turks* and *Heathens*, than among many Christians, who make a great profession of religion. Woe be to those Christians, by whom such offences come! surely *it had been better for them, that they had never been born*, than that their lives should be such a scandal to Christianity.

4. Just and honest dealing with men, will be some evidence of

thy right and title to heaven, Psal. v. 1, 2. the Psalmist describing who shall ascend the holy hill of Sion, a type of heaven, giveth such characters, as chiefly relate to duties of honesty and righteousness, having propounded this question, verse 1. *Who shall dwell in God's holy hill?* maketh this answer in the next verse, *He that walketh uprightly, and loveth righteousness.* So that he is a *citizen of heaven*, who walks uprightly towards God, and works righteousness towards men; who doth not only talk of righteousness, but worketh righteousness: who doth not ask, much less exact unreasonable prices for his commodities, but observes a *due proportion* in his buying and selling.

Q. If you ask what rule is to be observed for the setting a price upon our commodities, that we may content ourselves with reasonable gains?

A. The best rule, I know, is to observe the ordinary price of the market, which valueth things with consideration of all circumstances, as scarcity, plenty, time, &c.

5. Wealth gotten by unjust and deceitful weights, is usually accompanied with the secret curse of the Lord; so that they seldom continue long, but melt many times away in the same hands that got them; according to that of the Prophet, Jer. xvii. 12. 'As the partridge sitteth on eggs, and hatcheth them not; so he that getteth riches, and not by right, shall leave them in the midst of his days, and at his end shall be a fool.' That which is gathered by the unrighteousness of *man*, shall be scattered by the wrath of *God*. Though men should thrive by their unjust and injurious dealing, yet their worldly wealth can never recompense their spiritual loss. For what will it advantage a man, to gain a little earth with the loss of heaven?

Take heed therefore, O young man, of seeking to enrich thyself by any unwarrantable ways: what thou gettest thereby, may prove to thee as the flesh that the *eagle* catched from the altar, and carried to her nest, which, having a live coal cleaving to it, set nest and young ones on fire. The curse of God is like a secret *moth*, eating into such an *estate*, as is got by fraud and deceit!

6. Without restitution of goods ill-got, there can be no true repentance, nor hope of pardon. Restitution is an hard work, as necessary as it is: the meat that goeth pleasantly down, costs some deadly pains in the vomiting up. Whatever unrighteous gains thou swallowest, it must be *restored*, or it will cost thee thy life. Lay not up such an unrighteous treasure, which will certainly put thee to the pain of *restitution* or *damnation:* If thou be able, thou must *repent* or *die;* and the pangs of thy repentance may be much more bitter than thy unrighteous gains were ever pleasant to thee.

Be wise, O young man, and consider, if it be so hard for thee to hold thy hands from unlawful gettings, how much harder it will be to shake thy hands off them, when thou hast them. The few

instances that ever we hear of, of *restitution* made (in an age of so much *unrighteousness*) do abundantly evidence, that it is hard work to restore.

O take heed, lay not up such a temptation for thyself against the time to come, which, if it proves too strong for thee, will be thine *everlasting undoing*. Provide thee better work for the time of thine age, than to unravel the wickedness of thy youth. Since thou art like to be so hard to vomit, drink not down that which *must* come up, or it will be thy *death*.

Some there are in the world, who, by their unrighteous dealings, have raised themselves from nothing to great estates, their fraudulence in their way hath been it that hath built them houses, and bought them lands, that hath filled their purses, and fed their families, and provided portions for their children. Oh it will be hard service for such to let all go back where it ought, to sell their lands, and empty their purses, to pluck off their children's fine clothes, to clothe them in russet, or in rags ; and themselves to come down from their greatness to nothing again ; and to take up with that little pittance again, of their estates, which they came *honestly* by. Let it be well considered, by such whose case that is, how hard it is thus to empty themselves. And be thou aware, O friend, in time, how thou puttest thyself upon this hard case, 'Either to strip thyself to the skin, of all thou hast dishonestly gotten, or to perish everlastingly.'

CHAP. XII.

Sheweth the Vices *whereunto young Men are addicted.*

WHEREAS there are sundry *vices*, whereunto young men are exceedingly prone, which are very displeasing unto God, let it be thy care and endeavour, to shun and avoid the same.

The *vices* of youth are these.

1. 'Rash and hasty anger.' Young men being hot and furious, like thunder and gun-powder, take fire at the least spark of offence ; and by indulging the violence of their passions, grow often outrageous.

I deny not, but there is a lawful anger, as when a man is angry either at his own, or other men's sins ; for that anger is without sin, which is against sin. But when one man is angry with another, either for no just cause, or for a very slight one, then is his anger sinful and unlawful : To which kind of anger, young men are very prone.

Many I know, count anger, even the hottest and most hasty anger, to be but a slight matter, a light infirmity ; therefore I shall,

1. 'Shew you the heinousness of this sin.'

2. 'Lay down some remedies against it.'

That you may discern the heinousness of it, observe these considerations.

1. 'The passion itself is exceeding violent.' Anger is *brevis insania*, a short madness, as Seneca calls it; and makes a man (as we say) besides himself; so as he has no government of himself, but is void of reason, in regard of the use of it; being more like an unreasonable and outrageous beast, than a reasonable and prudent man. It carries many a man beyond the bounds, not only of modesty, but of humanity also.

2. The effects of this passion are likewise very violent; for,

1. It distempers the whole body within and without. It disfigures a man's face and countenance, it makes his speeches very confused, his actions rude, and his whole behaviour unseemly. If you look upon a man passionately angry, you shall see his eyes glaring, his head and hands shaking, his mouth foaming, his tongue doubling, and the whole man even bereaved of himself.

2. Among the sober sort of people, it prevents every good thing they take in hand. It hinders prayer, by possessing the head with revengeful thoughts. Therefore, the apostle commandeth, that *pure hands be lifted up without wrath*, 1 Tim. ii. 8. It hinders profitable hearing of the word: Therefore the apostle James, chap. i. 19. exhorteth to be *swift to hear and slow to wrath*. For, whosoever goeth to hear the word, with a mind distempered through anger, shall carry away but little of that he heareth.

3. Passionate anger, driveth away the Holy Spirit of God, who cannot endure an unquiet mansion, but loveth the meek and quiet habitation. The clamour and tumult of passion is such an offence to *him*, as causeth *him* to withdraw.

4. As anger driveth away the Spirit of God, so it makes room for the devil, Eph. iv. 26, 27. *Be angry, and sin not;* and then followeth, *Give not place to the devil.* If you give way to anger, you thereby give place to the devil; and that furious devil within, opens the doors to let in the unclean devil without.

5. Hasty anger, is a badge and mark of a very fool. *He that is soon angry, dealeth very foolishly*, saith the wise man, Prov. xiv. 17. that is, He speaketh and doth many absurd things, which maketh him a laughing-stock to others. Therefore he adviseth, Eccles. vii. 9. *Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry: for anger resteth in the bosom of fools.*

Having shewed in several particulars, the heinousness of unjust anger; I come now to shew you some *remedies*.

1. For the preventing thereof.

2. For the suppressing thereof, after it hath seized on thee.

Remedies for the *preventing* of anger are these;

1. 'Take every thing, so far as possible thou canst, in the bet-

ter part.' Do not judge every shew and appearance of wrong, to be indeed a wrong; if it be, do not aggravate, and make it greater than it is; but, think the best of the mind and intent of him that did the wrong, that he did it not wittingly, at least not despitefully, or in contempt: For this conceit, that a man is contemned or despised, doth sooner stir up anger and wrath, than any other thoughts. Or, if an injury be so, as it cannot be taken as it is, yet remember, thou hast done, or may do the like for others, if not to man, yet to God, against whom thou hast *despitefully* and *contemptuously* sinned; and thereupon resolve with thyself to be *slow to anger* towards others, as thou wouldst have God *slow to anger* towards thee.

2. Accustom thyself to a daily and continual meditation on God's all-seeing and all-ruling providence; how nothing comes to pass or falls out without it; so that whenever any occasion is offered, which might provoke thee to anger, consider with thyself, that this comes not without the special providence of God, who will turn it to thy *good*, if thou belongest to him; according to that gracious promise, Rom. viii. 28. 'All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to them that are the called according to his purpose.' Look up to God, and be not like the dog, to snarl at the stone, never considering the flinger. David had provocation enough from Shimei's cursing him, to make him angry, and boil up his passion to the heighth; but he looked up to God, and saw his hand at Shimei's tongue's end; wherefore he said, *Let him curse, for the Lord hath bid him*, 2 Sam. xvi. 11. and this quieted his heart against the revilings of Shimei. O, what a cooler of inordinate passion would be in Christians, to see the hand of God's providence in all the injuries and indignities, in all the wrongs and unworthy usages, that they here meet withal!

3. Avoid all occasions of anger; as the company of angry choleric persons, whose angry words are apt to move one to passion; therefore saith the wise man, Prov. xii. 24. *Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go*, nor walk familiarly. Avoid likewise gaming and drunkenness, which are great occasions of angry words, yea, and many times of angry blows. It is not possible for any man to avoid any sin, that doth not avoid the occasion thereof.

4. 'Labour to be persuaded, that it is greater honour to pass by and not regard an injury, than to follow and pursue every wrong with revenge.' Solomon saith, *It is the glory of a man to pass by an infirmity*, Prov. xix. 17. Herein lieth true *magnanimity*, when a man passes by, and regards not every light injury; when he can hold the bridle, and keep in, and keep under and encompass so headstrong a passion. Heathen men, by the light of nature, could say, *Fortior est qui se quam qui fortissima vincent mœnia.* That 'he is a more valiant man that overcometh himself, than he

that conquereth a city ;' which Solomon expressly affirmeth, Prov. xvi. 32. ' He that is slow to anger, is better than the mighty ; and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city.'

5. ' Be often viewing thyself:' look into thine heart, to see the abominable corruption that is there. The more a man knows how vile and wretched he is, the less angry will he be with others : for he seeth more cause to be displeased with himself, for his sins and transgressions committed against God, than to be angry with his brother for any wrong or injury done to him. The overhigh conceit some men have of themselves and their own worth, occasion them to be so suddenly angry with others, because they are apt to think themselves undervalued by them ; whereas, he who understands himself rightly, what a poor unworthy wretch he is, will not easily think himself undervalued by others, having lower and meaner thoughts of himself, than others can have of him.

6. ' Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would mortify and subdue all thy earthly affections, especially this corrupt and violent one of anger.' This thou shouldst do, as at all times, so especially when thou discoverest the passion of anger begin to boil up in thee.

Having shewed you the *remedies for the preventing of anger ;* I shall now shew you the *remedies for the suppressing* thereof.

1. ' Keep down the first rising of anger.' Thou must give this *water of bitterness* no passage, no, not a little, lest (like that in Ezekiel) it grow from ancle deep to knee deep, from thence to the thighs ; and so at last it prove a river that cannot be passed over without drowning. To this purpose, tendeth that of the apostle, Eph. iv. 26. *Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath.* His meaning is, ' That if through natural infirmity, anger steal into thy heart, let it not abide a day with thee, meet it in its rising, and give it the fall, lest in the day having conceived wrath, thou travail with mischief in the night ; and in the morning bring forth revenge.' It is observable, that the apostle having said, *Let not the sun go down upon thy wrath*, immediately added, *neither give place to the devil ;* implying, that by giving *way to your passion*, you give *place to the devil* ; and that he who lies down in his wrath, will have the devil for his bed-fellow.

2. ' Defer for a while the execution of that vengeance which thy wrath provokes thee to take ;' so will thy blood wax cold, the use of thy reason return to thee, and time be gained for better counsel and advice : *Therefore the discretion of a man deferreth his anger*, Prov. xix. 11. knowing it to be a point of wisdom in a man to defer the execution of his wrath.

3. ' Depart from the sight and presence of him with whom thou art angry ;' for the object that provoked anger being removed, the passion will be so much the more allayed ; whereas his sight and presence doth more and more inflame it.

4. 'Turn the edge and point of thy passion upon thyself, and thine own sins, so it will not be overfiercely bent against thy neighbour.' Our affections are far more easily turned aside than subdued; as it is easier to turn aside the current of a river, than to stop the stream. Thus when a man is over-much grieved for any worldly loss or cross, if he turns his grief upon his sins, his worldly sorrow will slack.

CHAP. XIII.

Of Drunkenness, another Vice which young Men are addicted to.

2. ANOTHER sin whereunto *youth* is subject, is *Drunkenness*. I confess, there are *drunkards* of all ages, old as well as young: but, many get such habits of this sin in their youth, that they know not how to leave it off when they are old. Touching this vice of drunkenness, I shall briefly shew you,

I. 'What it is.'

II. 'What remedies may be used for avoiding the same.'

I. 'Drunkenness is a vice, whereby in drinking, men so far exceed the measure of *necessity* and honest *delight*, as they distemper both their minds and bodies thereby. By *necessity*, I mean, such a measure as is needful to preserve our life, and quench our natural thirst. By honest *delight*, I mean, the liberty which God in Christ has given his children *at times of rejoicing* to drink, not only for *mere necessity*, to quench their thirst, but also for Christian delight and pleasure. This did Joseph and his brethren, Gen. xliii. 44. And David saith, Psalm civ. 15. That 'God hath given unto man, not only bread to strengthen him, but also wine to make glad his heart.'

Lastly, I add whereby in drinking, men so exceed, as they distemper both their minds and body; because this is the usual sign, which makes a difference betwixt a lawful and unlawful measure of drinking: If any way it makes a man unfit for the duties of his calling, if the mind be thereby intoxicated, if the brain be disturbed, if the senses are made dull and heavy, there is excess, which makes it *drunkenness*.

II. The heinousness of this sin, doth appear by the fearful sad effects thereof; First, Excellently set forth by the wise man, Prov. xxiii. 29. &c. 'Who hath woe? who hath sorrow? who hath contentions? who hath babbling? who hath wounds without cause? who hath redness of eyes? They that tarry long at the wine, they that go to seek mixt wine.' This text I may call the drunkard's *looking-glass*, wherein they may see the woes and sorrows that attend them. As if Solomon had said, 'You drunkards promise

yourselves mirth, pleasure, and jollity in your cups; but, for one drop of your mad mirth, be sure of gallons of gall and wormwood, of woe and sorrow here and hereafter.' Other sinners shall taste of the cup of God's *wrath;* but you, after your tasting and turning off so many *cups of pleasure*, shall drink the dregs of the cup of God's wrath and displeasure.

O *young man!* what a madness is it, for the enjoyment of a little wine or ale here, to drink the vials of God's *wrath*, and lie in the seas of misery for ever! More particularly, the *effects of drunkenness* are these.

1. It defaces the image of God in man, and transforms him into the likeness of the beasts that perish. The image of God in man stands,

1. 'In his knowledge and understanding.' And where is the understanding of a drunkard? Is not this *man* above all others become 'brutish in his knowledge?' Jer. x. 14. or, as the words there signify, 'is more a brute, than to know?' What is spoken there of the *idolater*, is it not fully applicable to the *drunkard?* who, when he is drunk, is a very brute; yea, and commonly even when he is sober, is but a very sot.

1. 'The image of God in man, stands in righteousness and holiness.' What a swine is this holy soul become! If swearing and cursing, if raving and madness, if whoring, and all manner of filthiness, if this be holiness, then this beast is a very holy man.

2. 'It hurts the body of a man, causing many diseases, as dropsies, gouts, apoplexies, agues, consumptions of the vital parts, inflammations of the blood:' so that, though they may drink healths, and pretend it is for their health, yet, indeed they drink sicknesses: for, who hath more infirmities and deformities, who hath richer faces and redder eyes, than such as tarry long at the wine?

3. 'It hurts the souls of men, filling them full of noisome lust.' Prov. xxiii. 33. Solomon speaking to the *drunkard*, saith, 'Thine eyes shall behold strange women,' that is, *harlots*, implying *drunkenness* to be the occasion of *adultery:* though all adulterers are not drunkards; yet, there are few drunkards, but are adulterers.

4. 'It is dangerous to the several faculties of the soul,' for, it besotteth the wit, enfeebleth the memory, dulleth the spirits, drowns the judgment, and depriveth men of the use of their understanding, so that many times they differ not from beasts. Xenophon, in his Kuropaideia, reports of Cyrus, the Persian Monarch, that being asked by his grandfather Astyages, why he refused to drink wine, answered, 'For fear he should drink poison instead of wine; for, sure I am, saith he, that not one of the guests yesterday did rise from your table in his right mind or wit, which makes me think, that poison was mingled with their wine.' Whereas indeed, it was the abundance of wine which they had drank, that deprived them of their senses.

5. 'Drunkenness weakens men's estates. He that loveth wine shall not be rich,' Prov. xxi. 17. 'The drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty,' Prov. xxiii. 21. Experience hath verified the truth of this; for, how many poor men have oftentimes spent more in an evening in an ale-house, than they have earned all the day before at their work? And how many rich men, who have had fair revenues left them by their fathers, have in a short time embezzled all away by drinking; and so robbed not only their wives and children, but likewise God, and the poor, of what belonged to them? How sad will it be with many, when they shall see how many pounds they have spent in drink, and how little for God's honour!

6. 'Drunkenness robs men of their precious time.' No sort of men usually mispend so much precious time as drunkards; for they use to sit long at the wine, as the prophet Isaiah describes them, chap. v. 11. 'They rise up early to follow *drunkenness*, and continue until night, till the wine does inflame them.' And when the wine hath once inflamed them, then they are a while after unfit for any thing but sleep.

7. Another effect of drunkenness is, that it makes a man unfit to all good duties, especially to that of Christian watchfulness, which our blessed Saviour and his apostles often call for, whereby he should be always prepared to appear before Christ whensoever he shall come to judgment. Therefore, Christ forewarns all his, 'to take heed that their hearts be not overcome with surfeiting and drunkenness,' lest that day come on them unawares, Luke xxi. 34.

O wretch! what if that day of the Lord should come upon thee in thy drunken fit! 'The day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night.' The drunkard's life is all night, a drousy sleepy season; it is often night with him at noon; his cups darken (as to him) the brightest sun, and serve for clouds or curtains to cover him up to sleep.

Arise, sleeper, the Lord is coming, thy day is near, the next fit of drunkenness may be the night wherein the Judge will come. Do not put it off thus: 'I do not think so, I believe He will not come yet;' He is the more like to come for that, that thou thinkest he will not. That wicked servant (Luke xii. 45.) that said, 'My Lord delayeth his coming; and did eat and drink, and was drunken: the Lord of that servant shall come in a day, when he looketh not for him, and at an hour, when he is not aware.' Thou thinkest not that death will meet thee, that judgment will meet thee the next time that thou art drunken. But, what if it should be so, if thou shouldst be snatched from the ale-bench, and brought to judgment? How would thou give an account of thyself to God, when thou hast not *reason enough* left thee to give an answer to a

man. Watch therefore, but that can never be, unless thou wilt first awake from thy drunkenness.

Having shewed the nature and heinousness of the sin of drunkenness; come we now to the remedies for avoiding the same.

1. 'Often meditate of the dreadful woes denounced against drunkards; and the dreadful judgment threatened against them.'

'Woe to the drunkards of Ephraim, Isa. xxviii. 1. Woe to them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink, and continue until night, till wine enflame them,' Isa. v. 12. Note this, O young man, who count it a glory to be able to bear much strong drink; a glory more fit for a draw-horse than a man: Yet, such men, or rather such beasts there are, which glory in drinking others under-board, as they use to speak. If this be not, what is it for men to glory in their shame? And besides, thus bring they on their souls, their own and other's blood.

No marvel therefore, that the apostles put drunkards into the catalogue of them that 'shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven,' 1 Cor. vi. 10. and Gal. v. 25. And the prophet avoucheth, that 'hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure for them,' Isa. v. 14. Instance drunken Dives, whose soul immediately passed from earth to hell, where he could not get one drop of *water* to *cool* his *tongue*, in that tormenting flame, Luke xvi. 24.

2. 'Consider that drunkenness is the mother of most abominations,' Rom. xiii. 13. saith the apostle, 'Let us walk honestly as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness.' Where mark the course of the apostle's words, after 'gluttony and drunkenness, follows chambering and wantonness.' Thus Lot in his drunkenness, committed incest with his two daughters. Therefore doth the apostle exhort the Ephesians, chap. v. 11. Not to 'be filled with wine, because therein is excess.' He that is full of wine, his wickedness runs over, the stream of lust swells so high, that it overflows all its banks. Alexander, we read, in a drunken fit killed his dear friend Clitus, for which, when he was sober, he attempted to kill himself. Famous is the story of one, who once craved the devil's help to fulfil his desire: But the devil would first have one thing done at his appointment: What is that, quoth the man? Kill thy father, saith the devil: That is too horrid a fact, replies the man. Then lie with thy mother, saith the devil: That is most unnatural, quoth the man. Wilt thou be drunk, saith the devil? That I will, quoth the man: and being drunk, defiled his mother, and murdered his father. The moral of this parabolical story is this, a 'drunkard makes bones of no sin.'

3. 'Be diligent and industrious in thy calling.' Whilst Israel was working in Egypt, they had no leisure to sit long at their cups: but while they lay still in the wilderness, 'they sat down

to eat and drink, and then rose up to play,' Exod. xxxii. 6. 'Thou wicked and slothful servant,' saith our Saviour, Mat. xxv. 26. If slothful, certainly wicked; for the slothful and idle servant is the devil's captive, whom he carries about with him, and leads into every tavern and alehouse.

4. 'Consider God's all-seeing presence about thee wheresoever thou art.' Couldst thou sit long over thy cups, trifling away thy precious time in vain and fruitless discourses, didst thou but seriously consider God's all-seeing presence about thee, to whom thou must one day give an account, as of thy sinful actions, so, of thy idle words and mispent time?

5. 'Avoid the society and company of drunkards,' Prov. xxiii. 20. 'Be not amongst wine-bibbers;' that is, frequent not the company of such as are given to drinking and tippling. For though they do not find thee like unto themselves, yet, if thou consort with them, they will make thee such. 'For, as he that walketh with wise men, shall be wise; so a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' Prov. xiii. 20. As associating thyself with wise men, is an excellent means of getting knowledge and wisdom; so, contrariwise, associating thyself with drunkards, is the highway to drunkenness and folly; their company is no less contagious to such as join themselves to them, than such as are infected with the plague or leprosy.

There are two arguments which are very prevalent with young men, to persuade them to go on in this so heinous and dangerous a sin: but, being weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, they will be found very light.

1. *Argument*, Taken from 'the hope of repentance.' They flatter themselves with a conceit, that they can repent when they list; and, that heaven-gate will open to them at the first knock.

Answ. 1. 'Repentance is the gift of God, from whom every good and perfect gift cometh,' James i. 17. and therefore ought to be accepted by us, when it is offered unto us; and not to be delayed, and put off from time to time: For, as God is merciful, to offer grace; so He is just, to punish the neglect of it.

2. 'How many are there, who, though they have fully resolved to repent, and turn from their sins unto God in their old age, or in the time of sickness, yet have been prevented, and cut off by some sudden death?' One drunken fit may cut off that hope. How many instances have there been in the world, of men that have died drunken? Some drunkards have been twice dead at once, dead drunk, and drunken unto death, carried away from the ale-bench unto their graves, and thence to the judgment. And what if it should be so with thee? Where is then thine after repentance?

And how many that have over-lived their drunken fits, have been deprived of the use of their *senses* and *understanding*, in the

time of *their* sickness, and so have died senseless? and how many, who though they have lived to old-age, yet have been more hardened against repentance, than in their youth? which cometh to pass through the just judgment of God. For, what can be more righteous, than that they should be left to forget God when they are old, who would not remember Him in their youth? And this the Lord Himself threateneth, Prov. xxiv. &c.

2. *Arg.* 'Is taken from that present impunity.' They flatter themselves with a conceit, that because God doth not presently execute vengeance upon them for their drunkenness; therefore they shall not be punished, and thereupon take heart to go on in their sins, according to that of the wise man, Eccles. viii. 11. 'Because sentence against an evil work is not executed speedily, therefore the heart of the sons of men are fully set in them to do evil;' implying, that impunity increases impiety, and makes sinners the more obstinate; because the judgments of God threatened against them are not presently executed; therefore they go on in their wickedness. But let such know, that though God is slow in executing his judgment on wicked and ungodly men, thereby to lead them to repentance, yet, will He be sure in the execution at last; and the longer He is fetching his strokes, the sorer will be His blow, and the deeper will he wound when he strikes. In which respect, God's wrath may be compared to a great bell, which is long in raising, but being *up*, it gives the *greater sound.*

CHAP. XIV.

Of Wantonness and Uncleanness.

III. ANOTHER sin whereunto young men are addicted, is, wantonness and uncleanness, Prov. vii. 7. It was a young man that followed the harlot to her house. Young men are generally apt to this beastly sin, and to make light of it when they have done, counting it but a trick of youth, and a venial transgression; as if their youthful propensity thereto, and the commonness thereof in men of that age, might be their sufficient apology and excuse. Therefore I shall shew you,

I. 'The kinds and degrees of this sin.'

II. 'The heinousness of it.'

III. 'The danger of it.'

IV. 'Some remedies against the same.'

I. For the 'kinds and degrees of this sin,' it is either *contemplative* or *practical.*

'Contemplative uncleanness is, when the mind pleaseth itself with lascivious and wanton thoughts, delighting the sensual appe-

tite.' And thus there may be a world of wickedness in a man's heart, though the act of pollution be refrained; there is many a whorish heart, where there have not been whorish acts; and I am persuaded, that the outward act of fornication and adultery is not more heinous among *men*, than the lustful and unclean thoughts of the *heart* are to God. An adulterous heart, an adulterous eye, an adulterous tongue, are all an abomination to the Lord.

Of *practical uncleanness*, there are many degrees.

1. *Fornication;* which is, when the sin of uncleanness is committed by single and unmarried persons.

2. *Adultery;* when both, or one of the parties delinquent, are married; as the notation of the word intimates, *Adulterium quasi ad alterius torum*, The going to another's bed. And this so much the more heinous, it is a wilful shipwreck abroad, when it hath a harbour, and safe remedy provided at home.

3. *Incest;* which is committed by persons that are within the prohibited degrees of consanguinity, or affinity.

4. *Polygamy;* the having of many wives at once.

5. *Rape* or *ravishment;* which is a violent deflouring a woman, who never consented thereunto. Such was Amnon's sin in deflouring his sister Thamar.

II. The heinousness of this sin appeareth,

1. 'From the *titles* given to it in the scripture.' The prophet Jeremiah calls it villany, Jer. xxix. 23. 'Because they have committed villany in Israel; and have committed adultery with their neighbours' wives.' Where the latter branch is exegetical, shewing what that villany was, which they committed, even *adultery* with their neighbours' wives. This sin is likewise termed *lewdness*, *filthiness*, and *uncleanness;* but most commonly it is called *folly*, and the actors *fools*, Gen. xxxvii. 7. 1 Sam. xiii. 13. and Prov. vii. 7. Solomon called the *young* fornicator a 'simple one, void of understanding.' For, what is greater folly, than, for the satisfying thy filthy lust, to cast thyself headlong into innumerable evils here, and into innumerable torments hereafter!

2. 'The heinousness of this sin appeareth, from the manifold threatenings in God's word against it,' 1 Cor. ix. 9, 10. 'Be not deceived, neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, &c. shall inherit the kingdom of God.' As if he had said, 'I know many of you are apt to flatter yourselves with a conceit, that God, who is the father of mercy, will not be so severe, as for this sin (which is so natural) to cast you into hell, or shut you out of heaven: but, saith he, 'Deceive not yourselves, neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, shall inherit the kingdom of God;' that is, except they truly repent, and leave off those sins. And, Eph. v. 5. 'This ye know, that no whoremonger, nor unclean person, hath any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ, and of God.

Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, for which things' sake, the wrath of God cometh upon the children of disobedience,' Col. iii. 5, 6. where the apostle assures us, that men living and continuing impenitent in filthiness and uncleanness, shall not escape the wrath of God, whose wrath is a consuming fire which shall burn to the bottom of hell. And, Heb. xiii. 4. 'Marriage is honorable in all, and the bed undefiled; but whoremongers and adulterers, God will judge.' And, Rev. xxi. 1. it is said, 'Whoremongers and adulterers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.' Thus you see how sorely this sin is threatened in the word of God.

3. 'The judgments which God hath executed upon men for this sin of uncleanness, shew the heinousness of it.' For this sin the Lord brought a flood of water upon the old world, Gen. vi. 23. for this sin the Lord rained fire and brimstone upon Sodom and Gomorrah, Gen. xix. 5, 24. God saw it meet, that they who burnt with the fire of lust, *should be consumed* with the *fire of vengeance*. We read, this sin cut off three and twenty thousand of the Israelites in one day, 1 Cor. x. 1. 'Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed, and fell in one day three and twenty thousand.' As there is no resolved sinner, but God follows him with his judgments, so he follows whoremongers and adulterers with strange punishments; witness that strange loathsome disease so common among them, which was not heard of till these latter ages.

O *young man!* let the many threatenings in God's word, and the various judgments he hath executed on *whoremongers* and *adulterers* make thee afraid, and turn this filthy pleasure into a dread and terror, to thee. 'Come not near the house of a strange woman, remember that the dead are there, and that her guests are in the depths of hell,' Prov. ix. 18.

4. 'There is no sin that is so directly opposite to holiness, and the holy Spirit of God, as this;' nor any sin that makes us so like the devil, who is often in the Evangelists called the *unclean spirit*, Mat. x. 1. and xii. 43. both because he very much delighteth in uncleanness; and likewise maketh it his chief design to entice and draw men thereunto.

III. The danger of this sin appears from the sad effects and consequences of it, some whereof are these:

1. 'It bringeth judgments on the body, in destroying its health and strength, filling it with *rottenness*:' it is the seminary of many incurable diseases; for the flame of *lust* consumeth the vital moisture, and the unnatural fire of burning *concupiscence*, extinguishes the *natural heat*, which two are the *fountain of all strength*. An incontinent person is the sink of all *corruption*, a bag of *filth* and *rottenness*, has more diseases attending him than an hospital; for

the righteous God hath appointed, that they who sow to the flesh, should of the flesh reap a plentiful harvest of corruption.

2. 'As it causeth a corruption in a body, so likewise a consumption in the goods and estate of a man.' 'Who keepeth company with harlots, spending his substance,' Prov. xxvi. 3. 'Lust not therefore,' saith Solomon, 'after strange women in thine heart, for by means of a whorish woman, a man is brought to a piece of bread,' Prov. vi. 26. Thus it was with the *prodigal*, who no sooner fell into the company of *harlots*, but presently consumed and wasted all his *substance*, and was reduced to such extreme poverty, that his desire was but to be a *fellow-commoner* with the *swine*, (of all creatures the most nasty and filthy) that he might fill his belly with the husks. Wantonness is usually accompanied with want, partly because it is a sin that brings the curse of God upon a man's estate, and partly because it is many ways a costly sin, much being spent in feasting and revelling, besides gifts and rewards. When Lais, that famous courtezan of Corinth, asked Demosthenes a great sum of money to lie with her one night, he answered her wisely, 'That he would not buy repentance at so dear a rate.'

3. 'As this sin bringeth a consumption on the body and goods, so likewise doth it bring a rotten reputation on thy name, and a reproach never to be done away:' for be his proper name what it will, a whoremaster *will be his common name*, Prov. vi. 33. *Whoso committeth adultery, lacketh understanding; a wound and dishonour shall he get*, that is, 'He shall be wounded in his name and credit, and his reproach shall not be wiped away, that is, the *disgrace* which he hath brought upon himself, by his filthiness and uncleanness, shall abide upon him. Though the wound may be cured by repentance, and the pouring in the *precious balm* of Christ's blood, yet, the scar in his name and reputation will remain.

4. 'It brings destruction to a man's soul, hurrying it into eternal torments in hell; the fire of lust is fuel for the fire of hell; *He that commits adultery with a woman, destroys his own soul*, saith the wise man, Prov. i. 22. that is, casts himself headlong, both body and soul into that lake, which burns with fire and brimstone. Sinner, that fire below, as hot as it is, would, if it be well considered, be a cooler to this fire of lust. When thou feelest lust burn within thee, then think of everlasting burning.

O young man, dost thou love thyself, or any thing that thou hast? Dost thou love thy body? abstain then from fornication and uncleanness, whereby thou sinnest against thine own body, and bringest a *consumption* and *rottenness* upon it. Dost thou love thy goods? then flee *fornication*, which is like to leave thee a beggar. Dost thou love thy credit? abstain, for it is a dishonourable sin, and will make thee for one of the fools in Israel; and cause thy name to rot and stink above ground. Lastly, dost thou

love thy soul? abstain, for that is carrying thee down to the depth of hell.

IV. 'For the remedies against this sin,' the scripture affords many; I shall hint some of the most *principal.*

1. 'Resist those wanton and unclean thoughts, which do either arise from thine own wicked heart, or are cast in by Satan?' Do not revolve them in thy mind, nor suffer them to lodge within thee, but with detestation, presently reject them, and cast them away. If thou canst not prevent them in their conception, let it be thy care to destroy them in their birth, that so they may prove abortive. If thou suffer them to live, they will receive growth and strength to utter perdition. Who having fire cast into his bosom, will not so soon as he discerneth it, cast it out? Quench these sparks at their first kindling, lest they break out into such a flame, which will not be quenched.

2. 'Be very watchful, as over thy outward senses, so especially over thine eyes, which are the doors and windows of thy soul, to let in lust.' Hereupon Job, though an holy man, and in years, durst not trust his eyes without a guard, but engaged himself by solemn promise and covenant, not to stand gazing on the beauty of a woman, Job xxxi. 1. Alexander refused so much as to see Darius's wife, a lady of incomparable beauty, fearing lest he, who had conquered the husband, should be overcome by the wife. Upon this ground it seems Zeleucus imposed a law upon the Locrenses, that the adulterer's eye should be pulled out; because sin entered in at those casements, therefore he would stop up the windows.

Hearken, O young man, hearken to the advice which we find, Eccles. viii. 9. 'Turn away thine eyes from beholding a beautiful woman; and look not upon another's beauty, for many have thereby perished.'

3. 'Possess thy soul with a serious consideration of God's all-seeing presence about thee, wheresoever thou art:' It is the very argument which Solomon useth to dissuade the wanton young man from his filthy course of life, Prov. v. 21. 'Why wilt thou, my son, be ravished with a strange woman, and embrace the bosom of a stranger? for the ways of man are before the eyes of the Lord; and he ponders all his goings: Though the unclean person commits this sin never so secretly, that will avail him little. It was the fear of God arising from the consideration of his all-seeing presence, that kept Joseph from hearkening to the adulterous solicitation of his mistress, *How can I*, saith he, *do this great wickedness, and sin against God?* Gen. xxxix. 9. Art thou out of fear of being espied or discovered by the eye of man, yet, consider the all-seeing eye of God is upon thee.

4. 'Shun all means, occasions, and provocations unto lust and uncleanness.' He that will shun any sin, must avoid the occasions

thereof, else he will tempt God to give him up thereunto. The occasions and provocations of lust are divers.

1. 'Fulness of bread and drink, eating to gluttony, and drinking to drunkenness.' As temperance is the best *preserver of chastity;* so intemperance in *eating* and *drinking* is the nurse of *uncleanness*, the oil wherewith the flame of it is kindled and increased, Jer. v. 7, 8. 'They were as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbour's wife:' implying, That when men are fed to the full, like pampered horses, they will *neigh after their neighbour's wives:* But take away the fuel, and the fire of lust will soon go out. Whereupon Lycurgus, to prevent all filthiness and uncleanness in Sparta, prohibited all feasts and banquetings by the law; for he knew, that gluttony and drunkenness were the mothers of wantonness and voluptuousness.

2. 'Filthy and obscene talk, is another occasion and incentive of lust.' For, as the apostle speaketh, 1 Cor. xv. 23. *Evil communications corrupt good manners.* Many, I know take too much liberty to themselves herein, and make nothing of it, but do flatter themselves with a conceit of the purity of their hearts: but let such know, that filthy and unclean words, do argue filthy and unclean minds; obscene words being but the excrements and overflowings of a carnal and corrupt heart; *for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.* Thy stinking breath smells of a foul stomach.

3. 'Lascivious pictures, wherewith too many do adorn, or rather disgrace their houses:' For what are they indeed but dumb *orators* to persuade to *lust*, and lively precedents, out of which a wanton *heart* will easily take out a *pattern of uncleanness*, for its own *imitation.* They are worse than obscene words, because they vanish and are gone; whereas *lascivious pictures* do abide and infect many, one after another: for it is found by *experience*, that *wanton objects* do *engender wanton fancies* and *imaginations*, which *tend* to *filthy* and *unclean actions.* Beware therefore, O young man, of gazing on *lascivious pictures;* rather turn away thine eyes from beholding *enticing* and *bewitching* vanities.

4. 'Stage-plays:' Many of which are stuffed with filthy and obscene speeches, and set forth with many lascivious gestures, by which they are very apt to infect the mind with effeminate lust, and dispose thy heart for unclean and filthy actions. The stage is a decoy for the stews.

5. 'Undecent and gayish attire.' Men and women's strange apparel doth oft stir up lust, both in themselves and others; especially when such parts as ought to be covered, are left naked. In Prov. vii. 10. a strumpet is set forth to allure others by her apparel. Æsop said wittingly to a gallant wantonly attired, 'That if he did it to please men, he was but a fool, for no wise man would

count the better of him: and if he did it to please women, he was a knave and meant unchastely.'

These are ordinary occasions of lust, and provocations thereunto, which ought carefully to be shunned and avoided.

6. 'Another remedy against fleshly lusts, is to busy thyself diligently in thy calling.' By this means the *body* of *man* is exercised, and his *mind* employed, and so kept from idleness, which is a *great cause of lust.* Idleness is noted to be one of the causes of Sodom's uncleanness, Ezek. xvi. 49. This is also noted to be the cause of David's committing adultery, 2 Sam. xi. 1, 3, 4. When *men* are idle, they have no business but to sin: but when *men* are busy in their *calling*, then they have no leisure to sin.

7. 'Flee unto God, by earnest and hearty prayer for power and strength against the power of thy lust and corruptions.' Beg of him that he would be pleased to cast the unclean spirit out of thee and endue thee with his holy Spirit, which may enable thee to fight against the *inordinate affections* and *evil concupiscence.* This was the remedy which St. Paul used in this very case, when he felt *the thorn in his flesh*, which some divines interpret to be *lustful motions stirring in him: For this*, saith he, *I besought the Lord thrice*, 2 Cor. xii. 8. And though he was not thereupon wholly delivered from them, yet, he found grace sufficient for his support, so that he was not overcome by them.

8. 'If these means prevail not, use the benefit of lawful marriage.' *To avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife; and let every woman have her own husband*, 1 Cor. vii. 2. and verse 9. 'Such as cannot contain themselves, let them marry; for it is better to marry than to burn.' Many there are who give Satan too great advantage against themselves, by neglecting this remedy of marriage. The Pope's forbidding priests to marry, though they have not the gift of *continency*, have been the cause of most abominable uncleanness amongst them.

CHAP. XV.

Of profane and rash Swearing, *which is another Vice whereunto young Men are addicted.*

'ANOTHER vice whereunto young men are addicted, is profane and rash swearing,' which our Saviour expressly forbiddeth, Mat. v. 24. *Swear not at all:* that is, Not in your ordinary communication; 'but let your communication be yea, yea; nay, nay; for whatsoever is more than these, cometh of evil;' that is, *The devil, that evil one*, verse 37.

This *vain swearing* is a vice which ill becomes any, much less

those who make a profession of Christianity; for a Christian's speech ought to be seasoned with grace, and not with profane oaths; it should be savoury, ministering grace to the hearers, and not unsavoury, ministering nothing but sin and scandal.

Swearing in our ordinary discourse, is an undoubted evidence of the profane person, who makes no conscience of any sin: For, what sin will he forbear, who will not forbear this unprofitable sin of swearing? whereas, other sins have their several baits and temptations to allure men thereunto; some the bait of profit, some of honour, some of pleasure; this sin of swearing hath neither of them; it brings no profit at all, but great loss, even the loss of God's favour, and the loss of a good conscience; neither doth it yield any pleasure and delight, unless a man should (like the devil himself) take a hellish pleasure in acting sin and wickedness. And what credit doth it procure, unless among such debauched ones, whose applause is a reproach; therefore I may with confidence affirm, 'That he who maketh no conscience of swearing, which has no worldly advantage to induce him thereto, will make less conscience of other sins that have strong temptation, and feed the sinner with expectation of advantage from them.'

O young man! let me prevail with thee deeply to abhor, and watch diligently against this wicked and most unreasonable practice. Remember the account thou must make at the dreadful day; an account must be given of *every idle word*, much more of *every vain and bloody oath*. If they shall not escape unpunished, who have spoken idly and vainly, how fearful shall their condemnation be, who in their ordinary discourse, have most impiously and profanely abused the name of the most great and holy God?

'I know there are several vain excuses common in the mouths of men for this sin; which, if they be weighed in the balance of the sanctuary, will be found very light.'

I. Some excuse themselves, 'They use only small and little oaths, as *faith* and *troth*, forbearing great oaths, as, to swear *by the name of God*, &c.

Ans. 1. 'Little oaths are sins:' Our Saviour hath expressly forbidden all kinds of oaths, saying, *Swear not at all*, Mat. v. 13. Suppose that to swear by *faith* and *troth* be not so heinous a sin, as to swear by the name of God, yet, it is a sin, seeing Christ himself hath forbidden and condemned it.

2. 'Little oaths are great sins.' God will not hold such *guiltless*. To be held *guilty* before God, notes two things.

1. 'To be under a merit of everlasting wrath.' By thy little oaths, thou deservest the wrath of the great God.

2. 'Guilt *notes* an obligation to wrath.' These oaths are bonds, by which thou art bound over to the judgment of the great day; and when there it shall be demanded, *Guilty*, or *Not guilty?* These only will prove thee *guilty*.

3. 'Little oaths are leading sins.' As he that accustoms himself to pilfer small things, by the judgment of God, will at length fall to steal greater things, from a *pin* to a *penny*, from that to a *pound*. So he that accustoms himself to these smaller oaths, by the just judgment of God, will at length fall to swear most *horrid* and *hellish oaths*, and stick at none.

II. Some excuse themselves by saying, 'They shall not be believed except they swear;' and second their words with an oath.

Ans. 'Thou wilt be rather less believed for thine oath.' Certainly every honest man will be jealous and suspicious of the truth of that man's words, who hath seconded them with an oath, because he who maketh no conscience of an oath, will make as little conscience of a lie; he that maketh no conscience of dishonouring God by taking his name in vain, will make little conscience of deceiving his neighbour, by telling him a lie.

III. Some alledge, 'that oaths are a grace to their speech.'

Ans. 1. 'Just such a grace as a blister, or a carbuncle is to the face.'

2. 'That grace or credit is dear bought, that is gained by pawning their souls to the devil.'

IV. Some excuse themselves by saying, 'They utterly detest *swearing*,' but they have so long accustomed themselves thereto, they know not how to leave it.

Ans. 'In pleading long custom thou dost not at all excuse, but the more accuse thyself;' for it is as if the thief should plead at the bar, that he had been so long accustomed to *pilfering* and *stealing*, that he could not now leave it: Would the judge take this excuse for good, or rather the sooner condemn him, as most justly deserving to be hanged? If custom will not excuse the thief for his stealing, or the adulterer for his whoring, How shall it excuse the swearer for his swearing? For every sin, by how much the more common and customary, by so much the more heinous and detestable. If once to swear vainly be a sin, then is customary swearing a crying sin, and must needs incur the higher condemnation. Know therefore,

1. 'That an evil custom is better broke than kept.'

2. 'Such an evil custom as this, though it be hard, yet it is necessary to be broken:' Say not any more, Thou canst not leave it; thou must leave it, or die; thou must break this custom, or it will break thy back, and undo thee for ever.

To help such as have long accustomed themselves to swearing in their ordinary discourse; I shall give these few directions.

1. 'Believe thy present condition to be very sad and dangerous, so long as thou livest in this sin.' What hope of salvation canst thou have, without true and unfeigned repentance?

2. 'Keep a narrow watch over thy tongue, that thou mayest not offend in this kind any more.' And if thou hast been so long

accustomed to it, that thou even despairest of leaving it off at once, labour to leave it by degrees; resolve, whatsoever occasion is offered, to keep a narrow watch over thy tongue; thus (with the assistance of God's grace) thou wilt not swear for the space of a whole day. And when thou hast got so far the victory over thy former evil custom, then take a longer and longer time; and so at length, by the assistance of God's grace, thou wilt quite forget thy old and wicked custom.

3. 'Break this old and wicked custom, by taking up a new and better.' Accustom thyself to serious and savoury discourses: let thy speech be full of grace, and then it will be empty of oaths.

4. 'Seriously lay to heart those judgments that from time to time have been executed on swearers, which have been many and grievous;' some dying with flaming heat in their mouths, as though the fire of hell were there already kindled; others dying with swollen tongues, and distorted mouths, God shewing the foulness of their sin by the strangeness of the punishment.

I have read of a young man, who was a common swearer, upon a very light occasion taking the name of God in vain, which so far provoked the Lord against him, that he sent such a canker into his mouth, as eat out his tongue, the very instrument wherewith he had so abused the name of God. I have likewise met in authors, a relation of a young gentleman of Cornwal, who being in the company of other gentlemen, swore most dreadfully; for which being reproved by some in company, he swore more and more. At length as they were going over a bridge in their journey, which went over an arm of the sea, this swearer so spurred his horse, as he sprang clear over the bridge with the man on his back, who as he was going, cried, 'Horse and man, and all to the devil.'

Such remarks of the divine vengeance thou mayest fall under here; but O what remains to be looked for hereafter! these oaths, which now vanish with the speaking, and fly into wind, will all meet thee in the belly of hell; and there those darts which thou hast thrown up against heaven, will all be fired, and stick in thy heart for ever. O young man! consider therefore, what folly and madness it is for thee to hazard thy body, and expose thy soul ('which is of more worth to thee than ten thousand worlds') to the suffering of all these fearful punishments, both *in this life, and in the life to come*, for just nothing, for a vain and unprofitable sin, which bringeth good neither to the soul nor body!

CHAP. XVI.

Of Lying, another Vice whereto young Men are addicted.

V. ANOTHER vice whereunto *young men* are addicted, is *Lying*, which doth usually accompany *Swearing;* therefore, Hos. iv. 2. we find *swearing* and *lying* yoked together. *Common swearers*, I know, do ordinarily twit those who make conscience of an oath, that though they will not swear, yet they can lie. But sure we are, that they who make no conscience of an oath, will make less conscience of a lie; they who make no bones of dishonouring God by taking his name in vain, will make no bones of deceiving their neighbour by a lie.

In the opening of this vice, I shall shew you,

I. 'What a lie is.'

II. 'What be the kinds and sorts of lying.'

III. 'The greatness and heinousness of this sin.'

IV. 'Some motives and arguments against it.'

I. For the first, 'A lie is a deceitful expression of one's mind against his mind: or, it is a speaking an untruth wittingly and willingly, with a purpose to deceive.'

II. For the sorts or kinds of lies, they are commonly three, *viz.* an *officious*, a *sporting*, and a *pernicious lie*. An *officious lie*, is that which is intended to prevent some danger, or procure some good, either to ourselves or neighbour. Many of these are mentioned in scripture, as the *midwives* of Egypt's lie, Exod. xix. 14. Rahab's lie, Josh. ii. 4. Michal's lie, 1 Sam. xix. 14. A *sporting lie*, or a lie in jest, is that which is made merely to make one merry, to pass away time, &c. such as old wives' tales of Robin Hood, Fortunatus, and the like. A *pernicious lie*, is that which is made for some evil, hurtful, and dangerous intent against our neighbour.

Q. Are all these kinds of lies sinful?

A. Yes.

1. For the last, none can doubt, it is a sin against truth in the general nature of it; and a sin against love and mercy in the end, and intent thereof.

2. For the second, namely, a *sporting lie*, no great doubt is made; for to say the least of it, besides that it is a sin against truth; it is also an unwarrantable and an idle mis-spending of precious time, which ought rather to be redeemed.

3. For the third, namely, an *officious lie;* though some doubt thereof; yet it appears to be *sinful* and *unlawful*.

1. The scripture makes no difference or distinction of a lie when it condemns it; but indefinitely and generally forbids and condemns all manner of lying; therefore the *officious lie* is a sin.

2. That which is committed against God, though it make never so much *for* a man, is sin: but *every lie* is committed against him; for in every thing we do, we have to deal with God, and must approve all our actions to him; therefore, before him to say any thing with our tongue, which in our consciences we know to be otherwise, is a sin against God, who is a God of truth.

3. Men may not lie for God, much less for a man, Isa. lxi. 8. 'I hate robbery for burnt-offering;' and he that hates to be served by theft, does as much hate to be served by a lie.

Obj. Many saints and holy servants of God have used this *officious lie*, as Rebecca and Jacob; Gen. xxvii. 18, 19. Abraham, Gen. xx. 2.

Ans. 'The best have their sins, and we are to follow their virtues, and to fear their faults: their faults were never recorded for our imitation, but for our caution.'

Obj. Yea, but God commended and rewarded many for their officious lies.

Answ. 'It is not so, God never commended nor rewarded any for their lies;' indeed many did excellent works by this means (which yet had been *better* had they *not* used a lie) as Rahab, the Egyptian midwives, and others. In their works they gave great testimony of their faith, though in their lie of frailty. Now it was their faith which commanded, and the things they did; not the manner of doing them, for therein they failed, and God was merciful to them.

So much for the several kinds of lies.

III. For the third particular, namely, 'the greatness and heinousness of this sin of lying,' Surely, of sins that are lightly accounted of in this world, and commonly committed, it is one of the most heinous.

Which appeareth, 1. 'In that it is so full of infamy, that such as make no conscience of sin, cannot endure to be charged with a lie.'

2. 'It tends to the utter overthrow of human society.' For what comfortable society or commerce can there be, where *men* regard not what they say? How shall a man know what to look for, or what to trust to, unless men 'speak the truth one to another?' He that uses to lie, how can he be believed when he speaks true?

3. 'Liars in scripture are reckoned among murderers, idolaters, and other heinous sinners, whose lot and portion, without true and unfeigned repentance, will be hell-fire to all eternity,' Rev. xxi. 8. 'But the fearful, and unbelievers, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all *liars*, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.'

4. 'The heinousness of lying appeareth, in that it is a sin against knowledge and conscience.' It cannot be committed ignorantly,

but with knowledge, consequently against conscience, if it be not past feeling.

5. 'The heinousness of lying appears, in that it is ordinarily an aggravation of other sins.' It is often made use of as a covering for sin: when men are faulty, a lie must be contrived to conceal the matter; 'Thy servant went no whither,' saith Gehazi, when he had been taking a bribe: Let his leprosy speak what advantage his lie got him;

> 'Dare to be true, nothing can need a lie,
> 'A fault that needs it most, grows two thereby.'
> *Herbert's Divine Poem.*

O young men, I appeal to your consciences, whether you have not many ways made *yourselves* guilty of this most *heinous and odious sin of lying*, but especially in *your* buying, selling, and trading. Have you not oft-times said in selling your commodities, 'It is good, yea, very good, and no better to be had for money;' when you knew it was naught? Have you not often said, 'That such a commodity stood you so much,' when indeed it cost you far less? and, 'That you were offered such and such a price for the same,' when in truth it was not so?

IV. *Motives* or *arguments* against the sin of *lying*.

1. 'It is as expressly against the letter of the law, as any other sin.' Read, Lev. xix. 11. 'Ye shall not steal, neither deal falsely, neither lie one to another.' And, Col. ii. 3. 'Lie not one to another.'

2 'Lying is a mark of the devil's children,' John viii. 44. 'Ye are of your father the devil—he abode not in the truth, because there was no truth in him; when he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own, for he is a liar, and the father of it.' God is a God of truth, and his children are 'Children that will not lie.' Isa. lxiii. 8. Satan is said, Acts. v. 3. to fill the heart to lie: 'Why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost?'

Speak, liar, when thou speakest a lie, whose language is this? it is the devil's mother-tongue: whenever thou hast a lie in thy mouth, it is a sign the devil is in thine heart. But whose child art thou the while? None of God's, he is the God of truth. It is sure, thou art the devil's child, 'for he is a liar, and the father of it.' O friend! is it nothing to be the devil's child, and to have thine own tongue proclaiming of it? It will not be long, if thou use this trade, ere thou be carried down to thy father's house, the place of liars, Rev. xxi. 8.

3. Consider the reward of a liar, even among men, who is not to be believed when he speaks the truth. Common experience shews, that one being once found in a lie, is hardly after believed, but is scorned, as a man of no credit.

4. 'As this sin is hateful in itself to God, so it makes the prac-

tisers thereof odious and abominable to him,' Prov. vi. 16. 'These things doth the Lord hate, yea, they are abomination to him, a proud look, a lying tongue,' &c. Though God hates and abhors all sin, yet *some* are more abominable to him than *others*, among which *lying* is one, Prov. xii. 22. 'Lying lips are an abomination to the Lord.'

O *young men*, how should the consideration of these things effectually prevail with you, to keep a strict watch over yourselves, that you break not forth into this sin of *lying!* but, as the apostle exhorteth, Eph. iv. 25. 'Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour.'

Obj. Some object and say, There is no living, or at least not thriving, without lying. To tie ourselves always to speak the truth, must needs be a great hindrance to our profit.

Ans. 'That profit thou gettest by lying, will be little profitable unto thee;' for thereby thou sellest thy soul to the devil; and that is a miserable bargain, where the soul is given in to boot for some trifling gain, which cannot be ransomed with the whole world. Men commonly think that gain is sweet, and comes easily in, that is gotten by lying; but alas! what sweetness or comfort can there be in that gain, that brings God's curse with it? Will thy gain, (if it were the gaining of the whole world) be able to countervail the loss of God's favour, and thine own salvation?

O young man! think of these things, and whatever thy trade be, have nothing to do with the trade of lying. Now, that thou art setting up thy trade, let not lying (which has a great stock going in almost every trade) have any thing in thine. Resolve to be true and honest; content thyself with righteous gains. But if thou wilt yet be a liar, never henceforth count, that God, but the devil, is thy father; and know, that though thou lie unto a man, yet God will not lie unto thee; he that is true in his promise, will be true in his threatenings. God hath said, 'Liars shall be shut out of the kingdom, and shut up in the lake of fire:' God will not lie unto thee. If this be thy practice, hell will be thy place and portion, as sure as God is true.

CHAP. XVII.

Of Back-biting *or* Tale-bearing, *which is another Vice whereunto young Men are addicted.*

VI. ANOTHER sin whereunto Youth is subject, is *back-biting* or *tale-bearing*, which is, 'a malicious defaming of a man behind his back, an uncharitable blazing abroad his failings and infirmities.' This we find expresly forbidden by God in his word,

Lev. xix. 16. 'Thou shalt not go up and down as a tale-bearer among thy people,' publishing those faults of theirs which ought rather to be concealed. The word in the original, signifies a walking about with tales, as it were a *pedlar* with wares; for, as the *pedlar*, having gathered up several wares from several persons, carries them up and down from one place to another, and is ready to open his *pack* in every place where he comes, in like manner, *back-biters* and *tale-bearers* having gathered up an *evil pack*, the rags and scabs, the sores and faults of God's people from several persons, carry them up and down from house to house, and there uncover and vend them, not taking any notice the mean while of their virtues and good deeds, though they are far more than their failings. In which respect, they may not unfitly be resembled to the *beetle* or *horse-fly* which, when it flieth into a field full of sweet flowers, if there be but a little filthy dung in it, will be sure to light upon that, passing over the sweet flowers. Thus is the *tale-bearer* apt to pass by all the good things that are in professors; but their slips and infirmities he gladly observes, and with delight can speak of them: but, as our Saviour speaketh, Mat. vii. 3. 'Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye?' Why art thou so curious an observer of his small infirmities? Think on thine own *beam*, the *greater evils* which thou mayest find in thyself, and this would silence thy *reproach* of thy *brother*.

Surely, if the Lord should narrowly pry into all the faults of his servants, as you who are fellow-servants do into the infirmities of one another, who were able to abide it? And should we pry into, and so freely publish our own naughtiness, the *pride*, the *follies*, the *frowardness* of our own hearts, as we do our *brethren's*, what a *name* should we get in this world! let us rather in this shew ourselves the children of our *heavenly Father*. As he doth unwillingly see the faults of his children, and 'passes by many of their transgressions,' Mic. vii. 18. so let us be loth to see or hear of the infirmities of God's *children*, but rather pass them by, and with the *garments of charity* cover their *nakedness*.

I deny not but we may 'judge the tree by the fruit:' If we see a man apparently guilty of lewd scandalous sins, and impenitently continue in them, we may (leaving his final damnation to the 'searcher of hearts') judge and censure him, for the present, to be in a most wretched state. But we ought not to be *too critical* in observing the slips and infirmities of our neighbours, and then without sufficient reason, and with joy and delight, to speak of them unto others.

For preventing thereof, I would commend to you that lesson which the heathen philosopher taught his scholars, namely, 'In the seeing and hearing other men's faults, to enquire, *Nunquid ego tale?* whether I have done the like;' or, whether I may not do

the same or worse? For there is in every one of us that original corruption, which contains in it the seed of all sins, which would spring forth in us as notoriously as in others, did not God keep them down, either by his renewing or restoring grace. By reason of this *original corruption*, the best of us have a disposition to the vilest sins; therefore saith the apostle, Gal. vi. 1. 'Brethren, if any man be overtaken with a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted:' that is, Considering thine own frailty, how thou mayest easily be overtaken with the same, the like, or a greater sin: therefore, deal as mildly and mercifully with him, as thou wouldst others should deal with thee, or thou art like to find the same measure from others; to find others as ready to censure and judge thee, as thou hast done thy *brother*, who will have as little care of thy credit, as thou hast had of his; for it oft falls out, by the just judgment of God, that they who are lavish in publishing their brother's failings, do find others as forward to speak of, and spread their faults; 'Do as thou wouldst be done by? Wouldst thou not be evil-spoken of? speak not evil of others: Wouldst thou not be made a *by-word*, a *reproach*, and a *table-talk* thyself? let not others be made so by thee.

CHAP. XVIII.

Of the well-ordering our Thoughts.

HAVING shewed sundry vices whereunto young men are much addicted, that so they may carefully avoid the same; I come now to another direction for leading a godly and gracious life, which is this, 'Keep a strict watch over thyself in those things which concern thine own person.' For thy help therein, observe these rules.

1. 'Be careful of thy thoughts.' Care of, and about thoughts, is a special discovery of a godly man. Other men do seldom any more than wash the outsides, let what will lodge within them: or, if conscience sometimes put them upon a restraint of inward passions, and lust; yet, when do we find any of them make conscience of a thought?

For the better keeping thy thoughts in order, put these things in practice:

1. 'Give God thy *first thoughts*, by prepossessing thy heart at thy first awaking with thoughts of his infinite *purity, wisdom, power, mercy, truth*, or the like *excellencies* in him.' Thus did David, Psal. cxxxix. 18. 'When I awake, I am still with thee;' that is, 'So soon as I awake, my thoughts are upon thee, meditating on thy

word and works;' whereby his heart was exceedingly fenced and guarded both against the suggestions of Satan, and the wicked risings of his own heart. Holy and spiritual thoughts in the *morning*, will so season thine heart that thou mayest retain the savour of so good a beginning all the day after.

2. 'Do thine utmost to keep bad thoughts out of thine heart; but if they have entered in, and got possession, suffer them not to lodge and continue there, but thrust them out with violence the moment they appear.' We cannot hinder birds from flying over our heads, yet, we may easily prevent their nesting there; so the best of men cannot always hinder the hovering of worldly wanton thoughts in their hearts, yet must they deny them harbour there, by a speedy rejecting of them.

3. 'Make it thy business frequently to raise and extract holy and useful thoughts, as from God's dealing with thee, so, from what thou seest or hearest, yea, from all accidents and occurrences.' As the philosopher's *stone* is said to turn all metals into gold, so, by this *heavenly chemistry* mayest thou turn all earthly things into some spiritual advantage, and extract the pure gold of spiritual thoughts, from common objects and occurrences.

4. 'In regard the spirit and thoughts of men are very active, always busied, if they be not set upon some good objects, they will be working upon bad; it will be thy wisdom to get such a treasure of divine truth and gospel mysteries, as may furnish thy heart with abundance of matter for holy and spiritual thoughts, and to be much in exercising thyself upon them,' Mat. xii. 35. 'A good man,' saith our Saviour, 'out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth good things;' that is, Sends out suitable emanations for the good and comfort of his own soul, as well as other men's, laying out according to their laying up. Such as have a stock of spiritual provision, I mean, have treasured up many precious promises, many gospel mysteries and scripture truths in their hearts, will be able to bring forth, as savoury discourses in company for the benefit of others; so, many spiritual thoughts, when they are alone, for the good and comfort of their own souls.

5. 'Oft consider God's omnisciency, whereby he knoweth not only all our secret works, whether good or evil, but also the thoughts of our hearts.' 'Thou knowest,' saith David, 'my down-sitting and my uprising; thou understandest my thoughts afar off,' Psal. cxxxix. 2. There are two things which God is said to know afar off, the 'pride of man,' and the 'thoughts of man.' He hath, it seems, a severe eye on each of these; He minds our thoughts before they come into our minds, while they are in the *chaos*, or confused womb of the soul, before they are expressly conceived or formed, God knoweth them, therefore must needs know what we think when we think.

Surely, O young man, didst thou seriously consider this, thou

wouldst be more fearful of sinning in secret, and more watchful over thy thoughts, not suffering any worldly, wanton, or exorbitant thoughts to lodge and harbour in thy breast, much more to rule and domineer there.

6. 'Consider how God expects to be honoured by thoughts as well as by our words and actions, by the working of the heart, as well as by the way of the life.' Holy thoughts are something of the root of a holy life; who knows how much precious fruit may be in good thoughts? It is true, if they die as soon as they are born, and bring forth nothing, God will but lightly regard them; but there is great hope, that where the grace that is in the heart does put forth into holy thoughts, it will thence spring up into holiness of life.

'Therefore, O young man, forget not daily to render to God thy thought-service, as well as thy tongue-service:' And the rather, because thou hast more *opportunities* for one than the other. Thou hast not always opportunity for outward performances, but thou mayest when thou pleaseth think of God, and the matter of eternity, wherever thou art. What can hinder thee from giving a visit to heaven every hour, and oftener? Send these winged messengers up constantly, let there be frequent coming and going betwixt *heaven* and *thy heart;* let thy messengers go up, and they will doubtless bring thee down gracious and comfortable returns: He whose eyes is much upon God, his eye will affect and warm, quicken his heart, and beget upon it the very visage and image of God, in the view of whose face he lives. These good spies sent in search of the good land above, will return with such clusters of the precious fruits thereof, as will revive, encourage, and also strengthen the heart for that hard service it may be put to in its *journey* thither. *None* make such haste heaven-ward, and such sensible progress in their way, as they whose eye is continually there.

7. 'Whensoever thou goest unto God in prayer, among other sins, bewail the multitude of vain, worldly, wanton thoughts that lodge in thy heart, and there revel it day and night.' Think it not enough to confess the outward acts of sin, but likewise the inward contemplative wickedness of the heart: for the outward acts of wickedness are no more transgressions of the law, than the inward thoughts, which do beget and produce the outward acts. And sinful thoughts are the more abominable, for that they are the fountain and original of all actual sins.

Such therefore, as please themselves with this fancy, that they were never guilty of outward acts of uncleanness, drunkenness, murder, oppressions, and the like, so long as they entertain and harbour inward lusts after those, or any other sins, and live in contemplative wickedness, they shall find those, to their cost and woe, as dangerous as the outward gross acts of wickedness and uncleanness.

Besides, we ought to bewail our vain thoughts because of the number of them, which indeed are numberless. Not a moment of our lives, but swarms of vain thoughts arise in our hearts: so that though they may be counted lesser sins in comparison of outward gross sins, yet, by reason of their multitude, they may *prove* as *dangerous* as they. Many sands by their multitude may sink a ship, as well as a few great millstones: so, vain, wicked, worldly, wanton thoughts, by reason of their number and multitude, may sink a soul to hell, as well as a few outward gross acts.

Therefore, O young man, thou hast cause to humble thyself for thy *sinful thoughts*, as well as for thy *sinful words* and *actions*. And, having confessed them unto God, then among thy petitions, let one of them be for grace, to enable thee to keep down all wicked, wanton thoughts; and to give thee his sanctifying Spirit, which may spiritualize thy carnal heart, making it more holy and heavenly, fit to produce heavenly thoughts.

CHAP. XIX.

Of the well-ordering and governing our Words.

II. 'AS thy thoughts must be well ordered and governed, so likewise thy words,' which is of special importance for preservation both of our outward and inward peace; and wherein consists much of the *truth* and *reality* of our religion. For, 'if a man seem to be religious and bridleth not his tongue,' but breaketh out into bitter and reviling speeches, 'that man's religion is vain,' or to no purpose, James i. 26. Though his profession be glorious, yet, it will little advantage his soul. Therefore Solomon advises, next to the keeping of our hearts, to keep our tongues, Prov. iv. 23, 24. 'we ought to be more careful of our tongues.'

1. 'Because we are very prone to offend therein;' corrupt speaking being the ordinary issue of our corrupt nature.

2. Christ hath delivered it as a certain truth, 'That for every idle word that men shall speak, they must give account in the day of judgment; and that by our words we shall be justified, and by our words we shall be condemned, Mat. xii. 56, 57. Because men's words do declare what their inward disposition is; therefore by their words they are justified or condemned.

Beware therefore, O young man, that thou dost not vainly and causelessly, encrease thy accounts, either by rotten and unsavoury, or by idle and unprofitable discourse. Far be it from thee to use this wind of words, as bellows to kindle against thyself the flame of God's wrath here, and the fire of hell in the life to come. But rather let it be thy care, with the prophet David,

'To take heed to thy ways, that thou offend not with thy tongue,' Psalm xxxix. 1.

For thy better help therein, take these directions.

1. 'Be not free of thy tongue, but let thy words be few, knowing that in multitude of words, there wanteth not sin, but he that refraineth his lips is wise,' Prov. x. 19. and, Prov. xvii. 27. 'He that hath knowledge spareth his words, and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit;' knowing when to speak, and when to keep silence; and, ver. 28. 'Even a fool when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise,' because he hath this happiness, not to discover his want of wisdom. Many a man's folly and ignorance would not appear, could he but keep his own counsel. And the apostle James, chap. i. 19. exhorteth to be 'swift to hear, and slow to speak.' To which purpose Nazianzen well observes, how God has appointed a double guard to keep in the tongue; namely the lips, and two rows of teeth, that it might be restrained from breaking out by this double fence. Be not therefore lavish in words, but sparing in thy speech; for silence is an excellent virtue, and saves many a man's *credit*, *reputation* and *conscience*.

2 'Let your converse one with another, be more fruitful, communicating your experiences, your comforts and supports one to another, exhorting one another, and provoking one another to love and to good works.' This, questionless, is one end of God's bestowing his gifts and graces upon us, that we might impart what we have received, to the spiritual good and benefit one of another. And hereby shall we increase and improve our own gifts and graces; by communication we increase our store. We may warm our own hearts by our endeavours, to warm our brethren's.

That *your* discourse may be the *more profitable*, have even in your *minds* some *useful question* to propound to *others;* but therein be sure to *have respect* to the abilities and capacities, and the edifying of yourselves, or those to whom you propound the doubt. If they be learned divines, or experienced christians, then you may desire the opening and clearing some difficult place of scripture, or the resolving some case of conscience, or the explaining some hard point in divinity. If they be your equals in understanding, then suit your discourse to their capacity; and let it be your wisdom to *observe* wherein *men's* abilities chiefly consist, and to apply yourselves to them accordingly, whereby you will much advantage yourselves, and give others occasion to *improve* those *gifts* and *talents* which God hath bestowed on them.

3. 'When others are talking of worldly or common matters, labour to turn the stream of their discourses to some spiritual or savoury subject, to talk of God, or Christ, or heaven, or of the ways or means that lead thereunto.' It is much to be lamented, that professing christians should so often meet together to so little purpose. How is their time *generally* taken up with discourses

of worldly matters, without a word of God or *heaven!* whereas, if we are furnished with skill and resolution to embrace all opportunities, which might minister matter of digression from worldly to spiritual and heavenly discourses, we might make our meetings far more profitable than they are.

4. 'Be not over forward either in revealing that which another has committed to thy trust, or revealing thine own secrets to another; lest in the end he proving to be unfaithful, thou be forced (but too late) to repent thy folly;' that which thou wouldst not have told to another, tell no body; for if thou canst not, why shouldst thou think another will conceal what concerns thee?

5. 'Let no corrupt communication proceed out of thy mouth,' Eph. iv. 29. *Neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting*, Eph. v. 4. It is better to forbear speaking, than to vent that which is vain and unprofitable, or worse than silence. Abstain therefore from all evil speakings, of which the apostle mentions three kinds.

1. Obscene and wanton speeches, which he calls *filthiness*, and reckons among those evil speakings, which he would not have named among *Christians:* yet, how full of them are the *mouths* of many young men! who make it their *repast* and *reputation* to utter wanton speeches, to tell filthy tales, and to sing songs of love and lightness, full of abominable filthiness, which plainly shews the pollution and uncleanness of their hearts; for *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*, Mat. xiii. 34. Obscene and unchaste speeches, as they spring from, so they are great provocations to lust; for *evil communications corrupt good manners*, 1 Cor. xv. 33. Words being as the vent of an unclean heart, and bellows to blow up its filthy fire into a great flame.

Know then, O *young man*, it doth highly concern *you* especially, to be *watchful* over your words in this kind; for of all sorts of corrupt speeches, this filthy speech is the most beastly and corrupting. There are others more irksome to the ear, as blasphemies, swearing, cursing, and the like; but wanton and lascivious talk is the *most enticing:* and so much the more to be taken heed of, because it is somewhat pleasant and delightful *both* to carnal speakers and hearers. Observe the songs that young men and maidens have most frequently in their mouths, and you shall find them to be full of filthiness. Is it any wonder then that *so many* fall into divers kind of unclean and beastly actions, when their words are so seasoned, or rather poisoned with this filthiness? How can *chastity* be preserved, when such provocations to *lust* are continually used. 'The soul of just righteous Lot was vexed with the filthy speeches of the Sodomites, 2 Pet. ii. 7. And how canst thou think that thou hast a righteous soul in thee, if thou take delight in uttering or hearing filthy speeches?

2. Another kind of *evil-speaking* which the apostle mentions, is

foolish talking; whereby he means vain and unprofitable *discourses*, of whatsoever comes into *men's heads*, which tend to no good purpose, but are used only to pass away time. Many, I know, are apt to think, that vain and idle words are not to be reckoned of: But let such remember, that God registereth them all, and will bring them one day to a reckoning for the same, before his judgment-seat.

'O young man, how doth it then concern thee to be watchful over thy words and speeches!' O think not vain and unprofitable discourses to be so light, as not to be regarded. Consider to what end God made thy tongue, namely, to glorify him, and edify thy brother. Consider also what a precious thing time is, (which we ought by all means to redeem) and thou shalt find, that to pervert the right end of the tongue by babbling foolish things, and to mispend so much precious time thereby, is no light or small thing.

2. *Jesting* is the next kind of *evil-speaking* mentioned by the apostle, Eph. v. 4. whereby he especially meaneth, such jesting as tends to the abusing of scripture, or deriding such as fear God, or mocking of our neighbour. The word Heutrapelia in the text, Aristotle sets down for a *virtue*, which the apostle condemneth for a *vice*, and truly *jesting* (especially without great watchfulness, as to the matter and measure of it) doth ill become Christians. For,

1. 'It is not agreeable to our profession,' which requires very grave and serious spirit and behaviour.

2. 'It is apt to put the heart out of tune,' to discompose it for those weighty and spiritual concernments which we have before us, and to dispose us for vanity and foolishness.

3. 'It is an occasion of mispending much precious time,' and of abusing that gift of wit which God hath given for the good and profit of others, and not for the hurt and disgrace of any.

Pleasantness of converse, so it be innocent, and tending to *good*, is both allowable and commendable. But that liberty of wit which we intend for recreation, should be but as sauce to our meat, but little as to the measure of it, and profitable as to the end of it, namely, to whet the appetite to that which is better.

CHAP. XX.

Of the well-ordering our Actions.

III. 'AS thy thoughts and words must be well ordered, so likewise thy actions, and the whole course of thy life.' This the apostle intendeth, Phil. i. 17. 'Let your conversation be such as meth the gospel of Jesus Christ;' that is, As you have em-

braced the gospel of Christ, and make profession of religion, so see that your conversation be suitable and answerable thereunto, thereby manifesting the power of the gospel in you. O how sad a sight is it, to see men making profession of religion, instead of adorning the same with a godly life, disgrace it, and deny the power thereof in their *loose* and *carnal conversation!* Let such talk what they will of their faith, that they do believe in Jesus Christ, and therefore doubt not their condition is as good as the best; yet, let them know, that *that faith*, will not serve them which brings not forth a godly life: 'Though faith alone justifies, yet faith which is alone, not accompanied with good works, doth not justify, nor save; it is a dead faith,' James ii. 20. Wilt thou hope to live by that faith which is dead?

Young men, let it not content you to be only *believing*, but be *doing Christians;* be not *professing* only, but be *living* believers. Hast thou grace? prove that thy grace is true by this, that thou hast not received the grace of God in vain. Let thy *love* prove thy *faith*, and thy *labours of love* prove thy *love*, and the *fruit of thy labours* prove that thou hast not either *believed* or *laboured* in vain; be a Christian for *action;* let religion be not only thy profession, but thy business; let it not only be the business of thy Sabbath or praying-times, but let it be the ordinary business of thy life; let thy whole course evidence, that *godliness* is not an airy or empty *notion*, an insignificant and useless *form of shew*, but that there is a spirit of life and power in it, which works in thee mightily. That thy actions, and the ways of thy life, may be according to godliness; I shall give thee,

I. Some *general*,———II. Some *particular* Directions:

General Directions are these,

1. 'Engage thyself deeply in a design for eternity:' Resolve for heaven, and the way that leads to it; be no longer a man for this world, but for the everlasting kingdom; and study out with plainness of heart, what is the surest way to the blessedness to come; and whatever thou findest it to be, whatever object thou meetest with against it, let that be thy way. Studiously consider how thou mayest get into that way, and contrive and cast about how thou mayest effectually make progress in it.

'Godliness is the way to blessedness, therefore let that be thy great study how thou mayest live godly.' Till thou hast in good earnest taken up a godly design, thou wilt never do any thing to purpose in it. The most of men are so far from living a godly life, that they have not yet designed any such thing. *Some good* may be done at times by them, but it is only as it falls in their way, by accident, rather than upon any serious *good* intent. This God regards not at all, nothing is acceptable to him, no nor like to be profitable to us, but what is done upon *design*, upon this *godly design*. When the series or course of our *actions* do, as the

several links in a chain, all hang together, and draw all one way, then there is like to be something done to purpose. When there is only some little *good* scattered up and down, here a link of the chain, and there another, but not joined in a chain together, they will not help us on our way. Let that therefore be your first care, take up a *heavenly design*, and therein let all your *particular acts* of religion hang together.

2. 'Let thy whole life be a prosecuting and serving thy godly design.' And that thou mayest the more effectually prosecute it, and prosper in it:

1. Let faith and love be the *root* of thy life, and the several actions of it.

2. Let the word and will of God be the rule of thy actions.

3. Let the glorifying and enjoying *God* be the end of them.

1. 'Let faith and love be the root of thy actions.'

1. 'Let faith be the root of them,' 1 Tim. i. 5. 'The end of the commandment is charity, out of a pure heart and a good conscience, and (faith unfeigned)' Heb. xi. 6. 'Without faith it is impossible to please God.' Our persons must be accepted first, before our actions, and neither the one nor the other will be accepted without faith in Christ, Heb. xi. 4.

A godly life, and a life of faith, are the same. A life of faith hath its original from above, is fetched down from Christ, and is maintained and carried on by a continual supply of fresh influences from him, 'without whom we can do nothing.' If thou wilt live godly, thou must *look to Christ*, lean on Christ, and go to Christ, for all thy strength and motion. A Christian is beholden to Christ for every *good motion*, for every *grace* he hath, and for every *good duty* he doth.

Carnal professors are beholden only to their books, or their teachers, or their acquaintance, or their parts, their understanding, their memories, &c. nay, it may be to their flesh and lust, for all their religion; they would not pray as they do, nor take such pains to hear as they do, nor profess as they do, did not their *pride*, or their *covetousness*, or their *company* prompt and press them to it. But the religion of a sincere Christian, whatever advantage it may have from *books*, or *teachers*, or *good society*, yet it springs and rises all from *Christ*. That faith, which is their *root*, uniting them to Christ, doth also as their *root*, suck spirits and sap, and strength from Christ, and convey it to their souls, that they are thereby furnished for, and quickened to every *good work*. Let it be thus with thee, O soul, let thy faith in Christ be the *root* from whence all thy actions, and thy strength from actions come.

2. 'Let love be the root of thy life;' let thy duties be the works of faith, and labours of love. 'The love of Christ constraineth us,' 2 Cor. v. 14. Christians love *Christ*, both his per-

son and holy way; and thence it is they follow him so fast. They love to be holy, and therefore *follow holiness;* they love to pray, and love to hear, and love to labour for *Christ*, and to watch with *Christ*, and walk with him; and therefore it is they live a *praying*, *hearing*, *labouring*, *watchful life:* Love quickens them to duty, and love sweetens every duty. Young man, thou wilt never bear *through* the hard *services* and great *severities* of a godly life, thou wilt never *hold out* in that constant care, labour, watchful, self-denial religion will put thee upon, unless thy love to Christ do quicken thee on, and sweeten all to thee.

Carnal professors, whatever they do, it is all for *fear*, or from *force* or *fashion;* they would be bad enough, or do little enough, if they did dare, if they were not afraid or ashamed, or, were it not from the influence of some things external upon them. Though thou also must make use of fear, and all manner of arguments and helps to lead and press on thy backward heart, yet see to it, that thy love to Christ be the main spring that sets all thy wheels going; this will both give vigour, and a sweet relish to all thou dost: and according to this, according to what love there is in thy duties, so will thy acceptance be with God.

1. 'Let the word and will of God be the rule of thy life,' Psalm cxix. 9. 'Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?' The question may be enlarged, wherewithal shall a *young* or *old* man cleanse and order his ways? and the answer will be the same, 'by taking heed thereto, according to thy word. This word is a light to thy feet, and a lantern to thy steps.' It sheweth thee what evil, and how evil is to be avoided; it sheweth thee what *good* is to be done, and how; what *evils* are to be eschewed, and how thou mayest avoid them.

Young man, do not (as the most of thine age use to do) be unruly, live not according to thy unruly *head* or *heart*, according to thy unruly *lusts* and *passions*, but live by *rule;* live not by the rule of custom, or by the rule of example, after the course of this world; but let God be the ruler, and his law be thy rule: 'As many as walk according to this rule, peace shall be on them, and mercy,' Gal. vi. 16. Enquire diligently, What would God have me to do? How would God have me live? Would God have me live an idle life? Would God have me to swear, or lie, or covet? Is not this it that the Lord would have me to do, 'To deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, and to live righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world?' Tit. ii. 12. And if this be it that the Lord would have, go and live accordingly.

2. 'Let the glorifying and enjoying God be the end of thy life, and of all the duties and actions of it.' Let this be the scope of thy life, the mark at which thou aimest, that thou mayest honour God, and be happy in him. And that thou mayest eye and pursue both these in one, let this be the aim and intent of thine

heart in thy whole course, 'To work out thine own salvation,' Phil. ii. 12. In this *one work* is included all that thou hast to do or mind; in this thou wilt best glorify God, and secure his everlasting love to thine own soul.

Therefore, upon this, set thine eye and thy heart in all thy ways; so that if the question be put, Wherefore livest thou? Wherefore livest thou thus, thus holily, thus humbly, thus watchfully, thus self-denyingly? thou mayest be able to answer, 'Why, I live thus, that here I may work out my salvation.' Resolve to set thyself about nothing, nor to allow thyself in any thing concerning which thou art not able to say, I am herein working out my salvation, I am herein serving the Lord, and endeavouring the saving my own soul.

Young man, dost thou live to this end? What goest thou so often to the ale-house or tavern for? Is that to serve God and save thy soul? What is the intent of thy greediness in the world, of thy sensual licentious life, of thy scoffing at the strictness of *religion?* Dost thou all this also for the pleasing of God, and *working out thine own salvation?* Canst thou say, when thou art drinking and revelling, when thou art swearing and lying, or when thou art loitering and playing away thy time, canst thou then say, *Now I am serving of God, herein I am working out my salvation?* Or, when thou art playing the *hypocrite* and *formalist*, professing and praying, hearkening and talking of God and the matters of religion deceitfully out of *pride*, or for *ostentation*, or so cold or negligently as thou ordinarily doth, canst thou then say, 'I am now praying for my life, hearing for my life?' Will thy pride and thy hypocrisy bring thee to heaven? Are these *false duties*, that have nothing but a lie at the bottom, that are the covert of a rotten heart, are these they on which thou meanest to venture thy salvation?

Young man, if thou wouldst in earnest make this thine aim indeed; the *serving of God, and saving thy soul*, and having thine eye and thine heart much upon it, this would both discover to thee whether thy ways are right or wrong; and also fetch thee off from all thy vain and wicked ways, and quicken thee *on*, *in*, and hold thee close *to*, that *righteousness*, *sobriety*, and *godliness of life*, which is indeed the way to blessedness. Thus for *general directions*.

CHAP. XXI.

Containing particular Directions for the ordering our Lives and Actions according to Godliness.

IN the next place, I shall give thee some *particular directions*:

1. 'Beware of living in the wilful omission of any known duty.'

The omission of *good* maketh us as liable to eternal vengeance as the committing of *evil*. The unprofitable servant, we read, was cast into *utter darkness*, where was nothing but *weeping and gnashing of teeth;* not for mispending his talent, but for not improving it to his master's advantage, Mat. xxv. 24, 30. And, Luke xvi. 20, 25. we read how Dives was tormented in hell, not for taking away from Lazarus, but for not relieving him in his wants. And at the day of judgment the reprobates are condemned, not for oppressing the poor, but *for not feeding them;* not for stripping them of their apparel, but *for not clothing the naked*, Mat. xxv. 42, 43.

And no marvel, considering the omitting of a known duty ariseth from a wicked heart, and from a mind averse to God, and unwilling to his service. Besides, sins of *omission* are always accompanied with sins of *commission;* when we *cease to do good*, immediately we *begin to do evil*.

Bless not then thyself, O *young man*, in thy harmless condition, thinking thou art as good a Christian as the best, because thou art not as bad as the worst, but canst thank God with the Pharisee, *thou art neither adulterer, nor drunkard, nor extortioner;* (it were to be wished, that some could say so much) but know that this is not sufficient. A *man* may truly say this, 'I am not as bad as others,' and yet suffer with them in the same *lake of fire*. Thy omissions may be thy undoing: yea, and not only a total omission of all that is good, but an ordinary, and wilful, and allowed omission of any one thing thou knowest to be thy duty: this cannot stand with *sincerity*, which (however it may be at some time) will certainly *have respect to all the commandments of God*, Psalm cxix. 6.

O how sadly doth this speak to thee, thou halting and trifling soul! many things thou dost, and therein thou comfortest thyself; but are there not many things also, which thou knowest thou shouldest do, but will not? thou knowest it is thy duty to pray in thy family, in secret in thy closet, to be constant, to be instant in prayer: Dost thou so? thou knowest it to be thy duty to examine thyself, to search thy heart, and try thy way, that thou mayest know the state of thy soul: Dost thou this? How seldom dost thou spend any pains this way? It may be thou hast never done it, nor so much as seriously put the question to thyself, Whose child am I? or, How may I know, whether I be the child of God, or the child of the devil? thou knowest it is thy duty to watch, to watch thy heart, and watch thy tongue, and watch against corruption and temptation? Dost thou do it? thou knowest it is thy duty to sanctify the Sabbath, by forbearing thy calling, thy recreations, and carnal pleasures; by spending the whole day in public and private exercises of religion, not allowing thyself in vain and impertinent talk, or idle and worldly thoughts? Dost thou so? thou knowest it is thy duty to do good to others,

to their souls, by exhorting or reproving them; to their bodies, by feeding, clothing, or, otherwise relieving them: Dost thou so? Is there none of all this, nor nothing else which thou allowest thyself in the neglect of? If it be so, How canst thou think thyself sincere!

O young man, if thou wouldst please God indeed, and have evidence that thou art his, resolve an universal obedience, and be ready to every good work. Let not conscience fly upon you at last, and tell thee, 'One thing thou lackest,' one thing thou wouldst not do: be faithful, study to know thy whole duty; and rest not, till thy heart be willing to follow the Lord in all things whatsoever he commands thee.

II. 'Live not in the practice of any known sin:' For,

1. 'One sin is a violation of God's law, as well as many. James ii. 10. 'Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all.' A wilful breach of one part of the law, makes thee guilty of the violation of the whole law. The law of God is a chain of holy precepts; if one link of a chain is broken, you may say, the whole chain is broken.

2. 'One sin allowed and delighted in, is enough to keep thy soul out of heaven.' As Adam by eating one forbidden fruit was cast out of *paradise;* so mayest thou out of *heaven*, for but one sin, that thou hast committed, and not repented of.

3. 'The living and delighting in one sin, doth evidence a rotten and unsound heart.' As it is made in the scripture a note of uprightness, to make conscience of every known sin: so is it made a note of hypocrisy, to seem to make conscience of the forbearance of some sins, and yet to live and die in the practice of others. Hereby was Herod's hypocrisy discovered, who though, upon the Baptist's preaching, he reformed much, and did many good things, yet would not part with his beloved Herodias, notwithstanding she was his brother's wife.

4. 'One sin never goeth alone, but is ever accompanied with more.' For it is a natural effect of sin (especially being wittingly committed) to make men apter to sin, Rom. vi. 19. 'You have yielded your members servants to uncleanness, and to iniquity unto iniquity.' God in his just judgments oft-times, as a punishment for some one sin, leaves men so to themselves, that they break forth into the committing of others.

5. 'For a man to live and die impenitently in the practice of a known sin, is the dreadfullest judgment in the world:' Better were it for a man to be given up to the devil, than to the power of one sinful lust: the incestuous person was delivered up to Satan, (1 Cor. v. 5.) but he was restored again, and the better for it. Whereas we seldom read or hear of any who were given up to their own heart's lusts, that ever recovered.

O young man, how doth it then concern thee to withstand eve-

ry lust, not to indulge thyself in any sin! but especially to keep thyself from thine own iniquity; I mean, thy nature-darling sin, to which thou art most propense, by the complexion and constitution, and of all thy lusts are lothest to leave. Let not that bear rule in thee as formerly, but bend thy greatest force against it. As the king of Syria commanded his thirty-two captains to fight principally against the king of Israel, for full well he knew, that the king being once slain, the whole army would soon be discomfited: So, if thy beloved sin that reigns and rules in thee were once subdued, thy other sins would soon be vanquished.

What sayest thou now, O man, wilt thou hearken to this counsel, not to allow thyself in any one sin thou knowest to be so! Hast thou hearkened to it? thou knowest it is a sin to lie, and yet, dost thou not lie? thou knowest, that defrauding, over-reaching, defaming, back-biting, scoffing, quarrelling, thou knowest, that these are all sins: Are there none of them which thou allowest in thyself? thou knowest it is a sin, unnecessarily to keep company with sinners, to be the companion of drunkards, the companion of swearers, and the vile ones of the earth: Dost thou not only keep from the way, but from the company of such? Are they no company for thee who are the friends of godliness? Dost thou know thy own iniquities, thy special sins, that have greatest power over thee, and thou hast greatest pleasure in, and dost thou keep thyself from these? Is there not one lust that thou wouldst have spared to thee? God will not spare thee one sin, the scripture will not allow thee one; and if thou wilt approve thyself to him, let not thy conscience allow thee what God allows thee not; and let not thy heart love, and entertain, and practise it, whether conscience allow it or no. If thou wilt be upright, keep thee from all, but especially from thy own iniquity.

III. 'If thou hast been overtaken with any sin, and thereby made a wound in thy conscience, seek an healing plaister by sound repentance, and faith in the blood of Christ.' Lie not secure in any known sin into which thou art fallen, but rise speedily again: make up every breach between God and thy soul betimes. What the apostle saith of wrath, (Eph. iv. 26.) the same may I say of other sins, *Let not the sun go down upon them.* Do not presume to sleep one night in any sin unrepented of: it is dangerous to sleep at the brink of hell.

Hast thou fallen into sin? Do not say, 'It is but one, or but a little one.' It is *sin*, (be it great or little, one or more) and that is enough to destroy thee for ever, unless thou repent. Go speedily, and make up thy breach, repent, and seek thy pardon and peace.

But what shall I say to you, O rude and wicked young men, whose whole life is a continued course of iniquity, who have so black a cloud of witnesses to testify against you, who are so sunk

and drowned in lust and sensuality, whose hand is never out, but is always engaged in one wickedness or other, whose whole life has been an apprenticeship to the devil? O what shall I say to you? Is this a state to take your rest in? Is it a state to laugh and be so merry in? How is it that you are not all upon your knees, or fallen upon your faces? That you are not all in tears and trembling? Do you sit at the wine, and cheer yourselves with strong drink? Vinegar and gall, and wormwood is more proper for you, and sorrow and bitterness of soul. What! do you mean to dare out the Almighty? Do not you fear the wrath of the *Lamb?* Are you death-proof and hell-proof? Is the *Judgment to come* but a bug-bear? Dare you to meet the *Judge of all the earth*, and to stand before his bar with all your loads of guilt upon you? How will your courage come down, and your brisk and wanton looks be appalled? How will these stout hearts quake, and these bold spirits of your's shiver and fail, and hide themselves, if it were possible, from that terror of the Lord, in his dreadful and terrible day?

O how is it that you have no more pity, no more bowels for your poor, perishing, dying souls? What, will you still be laying on more irons, heavier loads? What, yet more oaths, lies, drunkenness, whoredoms, and obstinacies in them? What, will you never leave loading, till their backs be broken, and you be past remedy? O return, repent, and turn to the living God, and *He will yet have mercy upon you!*

IV. 'When through grace thou art recovered, take heed of falling back again.' A relapse is dangerous in bodily diseases, much more in spiritual. Christ gave this advice to the *woman taken in adultery*, and forgiven, *Go and sin no more*, John viii. 11. As also to the poor lame man, whom he healed at the pool of Bethesda, when he backed with a strong reason, *Go and sin no more, lest a worse thing come unto thee*, lest the rod be turned into a scorpion, John v. 14. Is the unclean spirit departed from thee? beware that he return not, lest thou become seven-fold more the child of hell in thy latter end, than thou wert in the beginning. Let thy former sins, and the smart they have put thee to, be warning to thee as long as thou livest. Hast thou repented? Art thou reformed? Bless God for so great a mercy. Look back upon the mire of the pit, out of which thou art delivered, and take heed to thyself, how thou ever comest there again.

CHAP. XXII.

Of Moderation in the Use of Meat and Drink.

V. 'BE moderate in all things,' more particularly,

I. 'In the use of meat and drinks.'

II. 'In sports and recreations.'

III. 'In the pursuit of worldly wealth, and seeking after riches.'

I. 'Be moderate in the use of meat and drinks;' feed for the satisfying thy hunger, and strengthening thy body for the service of God, and not merely for the pleasing thy fleshly appetite. I deny not, but the Lord sometimes gives us liberty to eat and drink, not only for necessity, but also for delight; and I grant it is a blessing from God promised to the faithful, Joel ii. 26. 'That they shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied;' but it is, that they may take *occasion* thereby to praise the name of the Lord for his *bounty* and *goodness*. But will thou therefore eat to gluttony, and allow thyself in such intemperance, as will make thee as ready to curse God, as to bless and praise him?

Our Saviour warns his own disciples, Luke xxi. 24. 'Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness.' It is observable, how he adviseth us to be as watchful against gluttony as drunkenness. Many look upon drunkenness as a heinous sin; but, as for gluttony, they make no sin of it at all, not considering that a man may offend, and make a beast of himself by excessive eating, as well as by excessive drinking. The rich glutton went to hell, not for any drunkenness that we read of, but for gluttony, Luke xvi. 19.

Therefore, O young man, it concerns thee to be watchful over thyself herein; let not thy table be an altar to thy belly, lest it become a snare to thine heart: beware of feeding thy lust, instead of refreshing thy body; eat for service more than for pleasure, to preserve nature, rather than pamper thy body: and when thou art feeding thy body, forget not to refresh thy soul, by meditating on God's *goodness* and *bounty*, and Christ's *sweetness*, who is the bread of life.

That thou mayest be the more watchful against this intemperance, consider the manifold mischiefs which usually accompany the same.

1. 'It is exceeding hurtful to the body, filling it with crudities, noisome humours, and dangerous obstructions, the mother of most diseases.' If thou wouldst enjoy an active healthy body, rise always from the table with an appetite: but, Oh the folly of many men, who for a short delight, which lasteth no longer than the meat is swallowing down, endure many hours' grievances, through the oppression of the stomach and pain of the head! yea, oftentimes dangerous surfeits, which hazard life itself. What pity is there to such as sell their health and ease for a few meals? Let them smart for it, their sickness may cure them of worse.

2. 'It dulleth the wit, infatuateth the mind, enervateth the soul and power thereof, quencheth and devoureth the vigour of the spirits, whereby a man is often made fit for nothing but to be a sleeper or an idle drone.' Is this thy thankfulness for the *bounty of the*

Lord to thee, to make such use of it, that thou art good for just nothing?

3. 'It is a great incentive to lust; when men make provision for the flesh, they soon fulfil the lusts thereof,' Rom. xiii. 14. Forbear to pamper nature, lest it prove wanton and impetuous.

4. 'I would ask such as give up themselves to the satisfying their carnal appetite, making their bellies their God,' Whether they do not think that they must one day answer for the good creatures of God which they have vainly consumed? If they make any question thereof, hearken to what the wise man speaketh, Eccles. xi. 19. 'Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth, and let thine heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth; but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into judgment.' As if he had said, Take thy course, O young man, give up thyself to thy lust, and please thy sensual appetite, *eat, drink, and be merry;* but know, thou shalt one day full dearly answer for the same.

CHAP. XXIII.

Of Moderation in Sports and Recreations.

II. BE moderate in thy sports and recreations; spend not *too much* of thy precious time therein: certainly, if thou didst but seriously weigh and consider how much *work* lies before thee, and how little time remains for the doing it, thou wouldst not trifle away so much of it in vanity and pleasure; but wouldst rather spend the *greatest* part of the time thou canst spare from thy particular *calling*, in renewing thy peace with God, clearing up thine interest with Christ, and 'making thy calling and election sure.'

I deny not but recreations are lawful, and may be used, provided,

1. 'That they are such as are *not forbid*, either by the law of God, or law of man;' for the pleasing ourselves in *any of those*, must needs be displeasing unto God.

2. 'That they are used moderately, not spending too much time in them, nor taking too much time about them;' for thereby you will rather be disabled for the discharge of the duties of your calling, than fitted thereunto, which crosseth the main end of recreations. The *mower's whet* is counted *no let*, but rather a furtherance of his work; but if he spends the whole day, or half a day in whetting, he spoils his scythe, and hinders his work. Now, our *recreation* ought to be, as whetting to the *mower*, wherein no more time must be spent, than doth conduce to the better fitting us for the duties of our general calling.

But contrariwise, how do the greater part of *young men* either

accustom themselves to unlawful recreations, sporting themselves in *sin* and *wickedness*, or else abuse their lawful recreations, lavishing away much of their precious time therein, making *vocation* of their *recreations*, as if their work were to play, and their pastimes were the very trade to which they had served an apprenticeship, and idleness were the business of their lives.

Ah, young man! Is your peace yet to be made with God? The pardon of your sins yet to be obtained? Your salvation yet to be wrought out? And is not the time allotted for these things both short and uncertain, and *yet*, do ye squander it away in *sports* and *pastimes?* Doth your everlasting happiness and misery depend on your well or ill *improving your time* here, and can you *so prodigally* lavish it out in sensual pleasures and delights? O that men endowed with *reason* should be *so foolish* and so unwise, as to hazard the eternal welfare of their precious *souls* for a few pleasing vanities, which last but for a moment!

It was the sad expression of Lysimachus, who had lost his kingdom for one draught of *water*, 'For what a short measure have I made myself a bond-slave for ever!' Oh the folly and madness that possesseth the hearts of many *young men*, who throw away their time upon their lusts and pleasures, as that which is nothing worth, which hereafter, if they had it, they would give a *whole world* to redeem, but cannot obtain!

Do you lack *pastime*, *sports* to pass away the time, *company* to pass away the time? Why man, is all thy work done, that thy time now lies upon thy hand? Look to it, thou mayest hereafter beg for an hour, one hour to pray in, or an hour to repent in, which now thou merely trifleth and playeth away. O what a *precious commodity* would *time* be in hell! One day of grace, one day to repent in, what a joy would it be to the damned soul! but then it would be *too late;* it is gone, and will not be recalled for ever. The more to restrain you from all excesses in your *sports* and *pastimes*, let me propound a few *considerations*.

1. 'Consider the shortness and uncertainty of that time which is allotted thee here, for the doing of all that is to be done for *eternity*. The life here is but for a moment, in comparison of that which follows after; yet, upon *this* moment depends thine eternal state. Thou art in this world but a *probationer* for the other world. Look as thou behavest thyself here, either in well-improving thy time and talent to the glory of God, or mispending it in fruitless sports and recreations, and in satisfying thy carnal lusts, accordingly will be thy state and condition hereafter to all eternity.

O young man, what folly then must it needs be, to deprive thyself of that *fulness of joy* which is at *God's right hand* to all eternity, for the enjoyment of a few pleasures here which last *but for a moment?*

2. 'Consider that the time here spent in *vanity and pleasure*, will yield thee little comfort on thy death-bed:' What was it wherewith Hezekiah comforted himself on his supposed death-bed? not with calling to mind his former glory, pleasures, and delight; but his serving God in integrity and uprightness of heart, Isa. xxxviii. 1. 'Remember, O Lord, how I have walked before thee in truth and with an upright heart; and have done that which is good in thy sight.' This was that which then yielded him much peace and comfort.

Go, O young man, to the bed-side of a dying man, and mind him both of his *worldly vanities*, with which in times past he was delighted; as also of all those *duties of piety*, and *works of righteousness* which he has performed in the whole course of his life; and then ask him, in which he doth now take most comfort and delight; and you shall find, that he will be confounded with shame to think of the former; and greatly rejoice with the remembrance of the latter.

3. 'Consider how thou must be called to an account at that last and dreadful day of judgment, as for thy other sins, so for thy mispent time, for the many precious hours thou hast vainly spent in *sports* and *pastimes*.' Thou mayest now make light of spending thy precious time in *vanity* and *pleasure*, in satisfying thy carnal lusts, thinking never to hear of them again, but assure thyself there is a day to come (how near thou knowest not) when thou must give account unto God of all the merry-meetings, yea, of every hour spent in worldly pleasures and delights.

Now, O young man, think with thyself how sad thy case will be, when thou shalt recollect how many days thou hast spent in *sports* and *recreations*, and how few in *fasting* and *humiliation*; how many hours thou hast spent in *carding* and *dicing*, in *drinking* and *tippling*; and how few in *reading*, *hearing*, *praying*, and the like.

CHAP. XXIV.

Of Moderation in seeking after Riches.

III. 'BE moderate in the pursuit of worldly things, in seeking after riches, that thou mayest not be drowned in the cares of them,' John vi. 27, 'Labour not for the meat which perisheth; but for that meat which endureth to everlasting life.' Whereby *meat*, our Saviour meaneth 'all things which the world affords for the use of man;' one kind being by a *synecdoche*, put for all other kinds. And by *labouring*, he means, an 'inordinate and immoderate endeavour after the things of this world:' For the word

in the Greek, *Hagazesthe*, signifies, to 'endeavour after things with the greatest earnestness, pains and diligence.' So that our Saviour doth not simply forbid the labouring for earthly things: But,

1. 'The inordinate intention of the mind of him that labours,' when it is filled with zeal for, and with carking distrustful thoughts about these earthly things: Or, the carnal distrust of many worldlings, who think they shall never have enough to keep them when they are old; which is a sinful anxiety, however vailed under the appearance of providence against future necessity, whereby they do but anticipate their cares, and create a needless distraction to themselves.

2. 'The manner of labouring,' when temporal things are preferred before spiritual and heavenly; therefore our Saviour addeth, 'but labour for the meat which endureth to everlasting life;' that is, chiefly and especially. Look how much more excellent the *soul* is than the *body*, things *eternal*, than those that are *temporal;* so much more ought we, both in our *judgments* and *affections*, to prefer and pursue spiritual grace and heavenly glory, before these temporary trifles.

3. 'The measure of labouring,' when we never think we have laid up enough, but are continually and eagerly seeking after more, our hungry hearts crying still in our ears, 'Gather, gather, lay up for the days to come.' When we cannot be content with food convenient, but seek after more than is needful, both for the present and future maintenance of the charge God hath committed to us.

It is recorded of Esau, that though he was a profane earthly-minded man, yet could say to his brother Jacob, 'I have enough,' Gen. xxxiii. 9. O then, what a shame is it for such as make a profession of religion, and would seem to be the seed of Jacob, yet cannot say, They have enough! O how many Christians herein come short of Esau! should you by your extraordinary care and pains to attain to a *considerable estate here*, what would be your advantage thereby? Perhaps you may wear better clothes, fare more deliciously, provide greater portions for your children, and at last go to hell with more credit than the poorer sort: And is this a privilege to be much desired, and laboured after, to descend with *pomp* into the pit?

Consider, I beseech ye, how *little good* your wealth can do ye: Can it free you from cares? Can it lengthen your days? Can it keep you from the *dropsy*, *fever*, *gout*, or other bodily diseases? Can it preserve you from death, or obtain the *pardon of your sins?* You may indeed procure the Pope's *pardon*, but, will God sell you a *pardon for money?* Had you all the wealth in the world, it could not purchase heaven for you, nor free you from hell, no nor procure you 'a drop of water to cool your tongue,' or quench

your thirst. O! who would lay out himself wholly upon that which cannot help him in his greatest distresses! riches avail not in the day of wrath. I beseech you therefore, in the name of Christ, to cast out this worldliness, and cherish it no longer; know, it will prove a murderer of your souls, it will cheat you of everlasting happiness, and entice you into hell, by pretence of profit and advantage. It is observable, that we find not in all the scripture, that any saint was guilty of this sin, of setting his heart upon the world, and seeking immoderately after earthly riches. We read of Aaron's idolatry, Lot's incest, Noah's drunkenness, David's adultery, Peter's denial of his Master; but, where do you read in scripture of any saint that was overcome with this sin? It is not to be denied, but that as the seeds of all sins are in the best of men, so likewise the seeds of this sin; but that any saint was given up to the power of it, we do not read. How should this consideration stir you up to a greater watchfulness against the same?

For the better taking you from an 'immoderate seeking after worldly riches,' weigh these few *considerations.*

1. 'Consider the vanity of all earthly things,' which appeareth by the testimony of Solomon, whom God for his wisdom chose, as it were, to be the foreman of a grand inquest impannelled to make inquiry into the state of the world, and the things therein. Having seen, and experienced, and sucked out the juice, and even extracted the spirits of all worldly things, to make the fuller proof of what there was in them, at length he gives in his verdict, 'That they were mere vanity;' not only vain, but vanity in the abstract, therefore altogether ineffectual to render a man truly happy; which he lays down in this proposition, Eccles. i. 2. 'Vanity of vanities, vanity of vanities, all is vanity;' that is, all worldly things are most vain; for thus the *superlative degree* in the Hebrew is usually expressed, as the highest heavens, is called the *heaven of heavens;* the most excellent song, the *song of songs.*

All worldly things are said to be extremely vain,

1. Because there is no *permanency* in them, being all subject to change and corruption, deceiving such as trust in them; they promise much content and satisfaction, but they are so far from yielding the same, that they often bring much grief and trouble of mind.

2. Consider, they are not only *vanity*, but *vexation of spirit*, Eccl. ii. 12. Though riches are nothing in themselves, yet they are full of power and activity, to inflict vexation upon the spirit of man; for there is vexation in getting them, vexation and care in keeping, and vexation in parting with them: So that *worldliness* is not only a sin, but a torment and vexation; it is its own punishment. Most sins carry a delight in their faces, as this also doth, but they have a sting in their tail; that which is so beautiful in thine eye, will be gall in thine heart, and wormwood in thy

belly: As those that live *godly*, so thou also that wilt live *worldly* must suffer tribulation; and through those many tribulations must thou enter into the kingdom of everlasting darkness.

3. Consider that they are *empty* and *unsavoury*, yielding no true contentment to them that enjoy them: for, how many do we see abound with wealth, who yet have unquiet and discontented spirits? whereby it appears, that it is not in the power of outward things to satisfy the heart of man. True it is, those *worldly riches* promise contentment, and the *worldling's heart* deceiving him, makes him believe, that when he hath raised his estate to such a proportion, he will then rest satisfied and contented; but when he has obtained the estate, where is the contentment? 'He shall not feel quietness in his belly, but in the fulness of his sufficiency he shall be in straits,' Job. xx. 20, 22.

Be wise, O young man, if thou hast no more *grace*, yet learn more *wit*, than thus intensely to mind, and immoderately to seek after earthly things, which when thou hast them, cannot add one cubit to thy contentation; it is God alone that can satisfy the otherwise insatiable heart of man. The soul that seeketh contentment in any thing below God, is like to have the same success with that unclean spirit, which sought rest in dry places: The full bags or barns will be as empty things as dry places; thou mayest seek rest in them, but wilt find none.

4. Consider that worldly riches, as they are unsatisfactory, so unprofitable, yielding little profit to those who have most of them, Mat. xvi. 26. 'What will it profit a man, though he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?' As he assuredly will, who sets his heart more upon gold than upon grace and godliness; and seeketh more earnestly after worldly things than after an interest in Christ; the light of God's countenance, and the assurance of his loving favours.

Suppose a man have an assurance of this world's good, yet what profit or privilege hath he above him that enjoyeth but a competency? A little will be enough to a prudent mind, and enough is a feast when thou hast the most, what wilt thou have more than for food and raiment, out of all thy store? For what is over and above, thou must be accountable to thy Lord and Master at the great day, how and where thou hast bestowed it for him.

Obj. 'It may be thou wilt reply, that the rich may have daintier diet, and more costly apparel than the poorer sort of people.'

Ans. To which I answer, That the *rich* have no greater privilege or profit thereby, because the pleasure of eating and drinking consisteth not so much in the daintiness of the fare, as in the goodness of the stamoch: He who feedeth on his coarse fare with an hungry appetite, taketh more delight in his meat than he who is glutted with often feeding on his delicious fare. Neither hath the rich

man any more benefit by his costly apparel, than the poor man by his plain habit, which keeps him as warm as the finer and richer.

But how many rich misers are there, who though they have abundance of this world's goods, yet have not the heart to use them, but spare from their own backs, and pinch their own bellies, to fill their purses! What profit or benefit have such by their riches, but only the beholding them with their eyes?

Besides, no outward riches can make us better in the best things. They cannot make us more acceptable to God; neither can they make us more rich in spiritual grace; more virtuous or religious: They cannot assure us of God's love, nor of our future happiness: They will not profit us at the day of death, being then like Job's friends, miserable comforters, adding to our grief: Neither will they benefit at the day of judgment, but rather increase our bills of account, how we have gotten, how we have used and spent them. Thus you see how unprofitable riches are, to the owners and possessors of them.

5. Consider how riches are not only unprofitable, but also hurtful and pernicious to those, who setting their hearts upon them, do inordinately seek after the same. Hurtful they are not in themselves, and in their own nature, but through our corruption, whereby we are apt to abuse them unto evil.

1. The immoderate seeking after riches will both keep us from the performance of holy and religious duties, and distract us therein.

2. It will expose us to manifold temptations; as 1 Tim. vi. 9. and put us upon the committing of any sin for the obtaining a little worldly wealth.

3. It will hinder us from attaining unto heavenly happiness; and, like the camel's bunch, keep us from entering into the strait gate.

These considerations, seriously weighed, will be a special means to take off thine heart from an immoderate seeking after worldly riches.

CHAP. XXV.

Sheweth the Danger of bad Company, and the Advantage of good Company.

IV. BE careful of thy company, especially whom thou makest thy bosom and familiar friends: For that is a matter of great concernment to thy spiritual welfare. This I shall branch into two heads.

1. Avoid the society of wicked and profane persons.

2. Desire and embrace the company of the godly.

1. 'Avoid the society of wicked men, which has been the bane and ruin of thousands of young men.' I do not say that all manner of society with graceless and profane persons is sinful and unlawful, and that thou oughtest not to come at all into their company, nor to have any intercourse and commerce with them in buying, selling, and the like. But thy care must be to avoid all intimate society and familiarity; yea, all needless and unnecessary conversing with them.

1. For first, it is exceedingly dangerous without a just warrant and calling, to be much in the company of wicked and profane men, especially such as are scoffers of religion, and traducers of *good men*, who by their loose conversation, and continual railing against religion and the professors thereof, will take off thy heart from all love and delight in holy and religious exercise; and work in thee a distaste and contempt of the ways of godliness.

There is a secret and bewitching power in profane company, to impoison and pervert even the best disposition; sin being of a contagious nature, more infectious than the plague, and the soul much more catching of the contagion of sin, than the body of an infectious disease. It is a thing of great difficulty, ordinarily and intimately to converse with wicked men, and not to be tainted with their sins, for besides that they are apt to infect others, we are very apt to receive the infection, having the seeds of all sins remaining in us. Joseph, though he was a virtuous young man, yet being in the *king's court*, soon learned to swear ordinarily, *by the life of Pharaoh*, Gen. xlii. 13, 14.

Common experience tells us how many hopeful young men, who have blossomed fairly, and brought forth some *good fruit*, yet by *frequenting* the *company* of wicked and lewd persons, have proved very profane and debauched. The *philosophers* do well observe, that all waters, both in colour and taste, participate of the nature and disposition of the grounds through which they pass: in like manner men do participate of the disposition and manner of those with whom they frequently and familiarly converse.

'It is not for the honour of God's children to hold intimate society and converse with wicked men;' men being generally reputed to be of their temper and disposition with whom they ordinarily and intimately converse, according to that old proverb, 'Birds of a feather will flock together.' The company in which thou delightest, shews what course thou lovest, and what spirit thou art of. If therefore thou delightest in the company of lewd and profane persons, thou hast cause to suspect thy heart is not right. The beloved disciple John makes it a sign that 'we are passed from death to life, if we love the brethren,' 1 John iii. 14. And it is *love* that makes their company delightful; and what sign is it in thee, that lovest and associatest, with *scoffers*

of the brethren? Search, and consider if this do not mark thee out for one whose *soul abides in death.*

Therefore, O young man, as thou desirest to keep up the *credit of religion*, thine own *reputation*, with the *godly*, and the hopes of thine own *uprightness* with God, beware of evil workers, and as much as possible keep out from among them; and whenever thou dost occasionally fall among them, abide there with fear, not with pleasure, and no longer than need.

3. 'By an unnecessary conversing with profane men,' thou makest thyself accessary to their sins, even to their *blasphemy*, *ribaldry*, and *profaneness;* for, by thy silence, thou givest a secret consent to their wickedness, and so makest it thine own.

4. 'Intimate and needless society with the wicked, will make thee liable to their punishments.' 'He that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed,' Prov. xiii. 20. that is, whosoever partakes with *wicked men* in their *wicked ways* and *courses*, shall assuredly partake with them in their *punishments.*

Therefore, St. John, as it is recorded of him, going to the bath of Ephesus, there met Ebion and Cerinthus, two blasphemous *heretics*, belching out their *blasphemies* against Christ, whereupon he made all the haste he could out of their company, fearing some imminent judgment from the Lord to fall upon them; who was no sooner departed, but presently the house fell down and destroyed them with their companions.

Ah young man, know assuredly, that if thou needlessly and frequently associate thyself with wicked and profane persons, thou wilt partake of their plagues. If therefore thou art engaged in evil company, speedily withdraw thyself from them. The *physician's* rule, in reference to persons infected with the plague, is good to be observed towards profane companions, *Cito, longe, tarde:* 1. Speedily flee from their company. 2. Flee far away. 3. Return slowly to them again. Now *visited persons* are not more infectious than *lewd company;* therefore, as thou regardest the health of thy soul, 1. Speedily flee from them. 2. Flee far away. 3. See them mend, before thou returnest to them again. Never expect to be one of Christ's true disciples, until thou leave that cursed fellowship. Hadst not thou better say to them, 'Depart from me, I will know you no more;' than have Christ say to thee at the great day, 'Depart from me into everlasting fire, I will you not know?' For one of those will certainly be, if thou dost not here depart from thy lewd companions, leaving their society, thou must hereafter depart from Christ into hell-fire, *where*, instead of roaring and singing, *will be weeping, and wailing, and gnashing of teeth.* But, it is not only the company of dissolute scandalous persons, as 'drunkards, swearers, scoffers of religion,' &c. I would advise thee to shun, but even persons, 'mere-

ly civil, dead-hearted, formal professors of religion;' let not these be companions of thy choice, or thy bosom friends, who being unacquainted with the *mysteries of the gospel*, and the *power of godliness*, cannot minister any savoury profitable discourse to their hearers: so that, whosoever shall frequently associate himself with such, neglecting the *communion of saints*, he will soon find his *zeal for God* and the *ways of godliness* much cooled; his fervency in *holy duties* must abate, his *love to God* and *his people* much lessened; yea, and an universal decay of his grace insensibly to grow upon him; so that a *Christian*, instead of proceeding forward in *religion*, and growing in *grace*, will go backwards, and find a *spiritual decay* in himself.

Therefore, O young man, in the choice of friends for thine intimate acquaintance and familiar converse, seriously think of this.

II. 'Desire and embrace the company of the godly, who may further thee in the way to heaven; make them thy familiar friends and companions.' The more thou conversest with such, the greater increase wilt thou find in thyself of *knowledge*, *faith*, *love*, *zeal*, *humanity*, and other graces. The very presence of a religious person, much more his gracious speeches, his holy advice, his seasonable reproofs, and his godly conversation, will be a great help to thee in the way to heaven. There is a certain virtue in the *words* and *behaviour* of men endued with *heavenly wisdom*, which (by the blessing of God's holy Spirit) doth work effectually on those who are conversant with them, for the enlightening their minds with the knowledge of God and his truths, for the inflaming their hearts with a love to God, and zeal for his glory.

O young man, thou canst not imagine what spiritual advantage may be got by conversing with holy gracious persons, especially if thou beest careful to treasure up those Christian experiences thou hearest from them, and what else may make for thy spiritual good. Thus will the *communion of saints* be improved to the *edification of saints*.

Having done with the directions which concern *yourselves* in particular; I now proceed to such as relate to *others*.

CHAP. XXVI.

Sheweth wherein a peaceable Disposition consisteth.

I. 'BE peaceable towards all.' Rom. xii. 18. 'If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men. Those two phrases, *if it be possible*, and *as much as lieth in you*, though they may seem limitations of the duty, yet they are also amplifications thereof; and shew, that there must be nothing wanting in

our endeavours, but our utmost ability must be put forth in *following after peace.* A peaceable disposition consisteth in these eight things.

1. 'In a backwardness to give offence unto others.' A man of a *peaceable disposition*, will forbear all *provoking language* and *carriage*, or whatsoever may stir up others unto wrath. I confess too many *young men* are like the troubled sea, continually casting forth the foam of *passion* and *fury*, but he who hath peace in his *heart*, will shew it in his *words* and *actions.*

2. 'In an unaptness to take offence when given,' well knowing that it is the sudden taking an offence, that doth occasion strife and contention, rather than the giving it; as it is the *second blow* that makes the fray. Many out of their pride think it a point of baseness, ignominy and disgrace, to put up with the least wrong, but Solomon saith, Prov. xix. 11. *It is the glory of a man to pass over an offence;* taking little notice of it, and putting the best interpretation upon it. If God were 'strict to mark what we do amiss, what would become of us?' God indeed is strict to mark what we do well. If there be any little good in the midst of manifold imperfections, God's way is to pass by the imperfections, and take notice of the good.

O young man, if thou would behave thyself as a *child of God*, and a *son of peace*, be not strict in observing every petty injury and offence done to thee, but rather pass them by, taking no notice of them.

3. 'In a forwardness to be reconciled unto those who have wronged thee.' I have read, that there had sometimes been a variance between two famous philosophers, Aristippus and Aeschines; Aristippus at length goeth to Aeschines, and seeks for peace and reconciliation, and withal said, Remember, though I am the elder, yet I first sought for peace. True, said Aeschines, and for this I will ever acknowledge you the worthier man; for I began the strife, but you the peace.

But, O young men, how many of you come far short of Aristippus (though a heathen *philosopher*) in this particular, thinking it no disgrace to break the *peace*, but a disgrace to seek it? forgeting how Abraham humbled himself so far, as to go to Lot for *peace* and *reconciliation*, the superior to the inferior, though the injury was done on Lot's part, and not on Abraham's. Surely, whosoever will be the children of Abraham, must follow the steps of their father Abraham; and though elder in years, and greater in place, yet go first to their brother for peace and reconciliation; yea, herein we shall imitate God, and thereby shew ourselves the children of our heavenly Father, who first seeks unto us, who have grievously sinned and trespassed against him. Alas! if God had not began with us, when should we have sought to him? we should have stood out with him to all eternity. Now, is it

the honour of God to begin with us poor creatures? And, is it not the honour of a creature to begin reconciliation with his fellow-creature?

4. 'In a willingness to part with thy right for peace-sake.' When men stand upon terms of *extreme* right, their peace is usually broken, and contentions are engendered. The world may count this an *effeminate softness*, but it is the *truest prudence*. I deny not, but a man of a peaceable disposition, may with a good conscience, seek to recover his own by law, provided that it be not for every small trifling matter, and without all private revenge and inward hatred, and after all amicable means and remedies have been used; for the law is to be used only as physic for those diseases, which cannot otherwise be cured.

5. 'In a patient bearing the wrongs and injuries of others done unto thee.' Mat. v. 39. saith our Saviour. 'Resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' &c. Which words are not to be understood literally, but comparatively; as if he had said, rather than revenge thyself by rising up against him that have smitten 'on the right cheek, turn to him the other also;' that is, be more ready to receive another wrong, than retaliate the former; rather than thou shouldest revenge thyself of a small injury, be ready to receive a greater.

Neither is this exposition of our Saviour to be applied only to real blows, to smiting by the hand, but also by the tongue, to the suffering of reproaches; as if he had said, if a man shall speak disgracefully and reproachfully of thee, be so far from casting dirt in his face, by reproaching him again, as rather be ready to receive greater reproaches and disgraces.

6. 'In a willingness to forgive the wrongs and injuries of others offered unto us;' wherein we are like unto God in one of those excellencies whereof himself glorieth. For, in Exod. xxxiv. 7. where we have an enumeration of the names of God wherein he glorieth, this is one, *Forgiving iniquities, transgressions and sins.* They therefore that forgive the wrongs and trespasses of others done unto them, shew themselves like unto God in his excellency.

Besides, our forgiving the trespasses of our neighbours committed against us is made the condition of God's forgiving of us, *Forgive, and you shall be forgiven*, Luke vi. 37. *And if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.* A dreadful word to all such who are of *implacable* spirits, who will revenge their wrongs, but will not remit them. Wouldst thou not be forgiven? Wouldst thou that God should revenge upon thee the wrong thou hast done him? O tremble! He will certainly do it, he will not forgive thee, unless thou forgive thy brother. Take heed, man, what thou dost, retain not revenge, no, nor ill in thy heart; for it is a vain thing to say, *I forgive*, whilst thou malignest in thy heart, and retainest a grudge within

thee. Thou never forgivest, till thou forget also, so far forth as never to remember thy brother's wronging of thee to his prejudice. This is the forgiveness thou wouldst have from God, that he remember thy sins no more: and this is the forgiveness that God expects from thee to thy brother; and so he expects it, that thou art at this point, either forgive, or thou shalt never be forgiven; either forget thy brother's trespasses, or God will remember thine.

7. 'In a readiness to do what good offices of love and kindness we can do unto those who have wronged us,' for which we have the command of Christ, Mat. v. 44. 'But I say unto you, love your enemies; bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you.' It is not sufficient to speak friendly and peaceably, but we must shew our peaceable disposition by doing good unto those who have wronged us. To requite good for good, is civil courtesy; to requite evil for evil, is malicious policy; to requite evil for good, is hateful ingratitude; but to requite good for evil, is true Christian charity, which goeth beyond all the heathenish love in the world. This is a lesson hard to flesh and blood; but the more difficult it is to nature, the more earnest should be our endeavours, and the more comfortable will be our practice.

8. 'In a forwardness to make peace between others who are at variance.' This is counted by many worldly politicians a thankless office, because they incur the displeasure, and lose the friendship of both parties. But, what if thou shouldst lose the friendship of one or two men, yet, by doing thy duty to thy neighbour, thou shalt gain the favour of God, which will abundantly recompence the loss of any man's friendship. Besides, though it should prove a thankless work, yet there is a blessing promised thereunto, Mat. v. 9. 'Blessed are the peace-makers; for, they shall be called the children of God;' that is, they shall attain to this privilege and prerogative, to be the children of God. And, saith the apostle James, James iii. 18. 'The fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace;' that is, such as make peace between others, do sow the seeds which afterwards will yield sheaves of comfort into their bosoms. Yea, by labouring to make peace, they sow the *seed* of everlasting reward, which afterwards they shall receive: So that the glorious rewards which follow this duty, do abundantly recompence the inconveniences and mischiefs which sometimes accompany the same.

CHAP. XXVII.

Sheweth how to carry ourselves towards others.

II. ANOTHER duty incumbent on thee, which relateth to others, is this; be affable and courteous unto all, avoiding all morose and supercilious behaviour: Religion requires *courtesy*, as well as *piety*, *good manners*, together with *good consciences*. Many moral men who have no saving grace, yet herein carry themselves like *Christians*. What a shame is it then for *Christians*, who have truth of grace in them, not to carry themselves like moral men!

This will exceedingly grace your carriage, and make your company welcome and acceptable unto all; yea, it will win the hearts of all with whom you have to do, and even knit them unto you. David's courteous carriage made all the servants of Saul to respect him: yea, it is said, 'All Israel and Judah loved him,' 1 Sam. xviii. 16.

On the other side, *churlishness*, *bitterness*, *testiness*, and such other vices, which are contrary to this virtue, alienate men's minds from them; yea, and exasperate them against them.

But withal, take notice, that this courtesy and gentleness must neither make thee an hypocrite and dissembler, nor over familiar with thy inferiors, especially such as are in subjection under thee: for God's image, which all superiors carry, must be respected of them, and accordingly must they carry themselves.

Nor yet must this make any over remiss in reproving offenders; for so would this comely virtue be turned into an hurtful and dangerous vice: Indeed it serveth to sweeten reproofs, that they may be the better accepted. Be courteous to all, but beware of connivance, much more of compliance with evil men in their sins. Let not pretence of being courteous, draw thee aside to be vicious.

III. 'Carry thyself humbly towards all men, thinking better of others than of thyself.' The truth is, that man that well knoweth himself, knoweth more of himself, of his own weakness and vileness, than he can know of most others; and therefore he may well have a meaner esteem of himself than of others; especially such as are of his rank, and betwixt whom there is not too palpable a difference. If he have apparently better gifts than others, yet, his humble mind will make him think, that others may have more true inward grace and sincerity, because he knows more of the deceit of his own heart than he can of others.

This virtue of humility, though it be primarily seated in the heart, yet, from thence it extends itself to a man's outward conversation, and proves a most lovely and adorning grace, which doth adorn our christian profession, and obtains favour both with

God and *man*. Solomon ranketh haughty eyes, in the first place, among such things as the *Lord hateth, and his soul abhorreth*, Prov. vi. 17. As for man, he naturally hateth pride in another, though he love and like it in himself, which is a great condemnation of the sin of pride.

But as for the humble and lowly minded man, he doth exceedingly *gain* the hearts and affections of others unto him: *Humility* is so comely and graceful a grace, that it makes him who is decked therewith, amiable and gracious in every man's eye. Whereas none are more disdaining than the proud, none are *better* respected both by *God* and *man* than the humble: For, it is the abundance of grace that makes men humble, as it is abundance of fruit that makes trees most bow, God highly prizes them, and accordingly bestows his choicest grace on them. *Men* usually lay up their richest wines in the lowest cellars; and God lays up his choicest mercies in the lowest hearts. Yea, 'God himself delights to dwell in the humble soul,' Isa. xxxvii. 15. God has but two thrones, *highest heavens*, and the *lowest hearts*. He overlooks the frame of heaven and earth, to look on a poor humble heart, Isa. lxvi. 1, 2. not with a bare look of intuition, but with a look of favor, complacency and delight. 'Though the Lord be the most High, yet he hath respect to the lowly,' Psalm xxxviii. 6. They are God's Jewels, in high esteem with him, yea, they are *God's glory*, Isa. iv. 5. They give all glory to God; and therefore God loves to exalt them to honor; so that humility is the readiest way to honor.

Many make it the chief design, and the main business of their lives, to contrive how they may be great and honorable in the world: and often it is the honour flies from them, as the shadow from him that pursues it. But if they should study to be humble, and carry themselves towards all, they would find that the speediest way to exaltation. For, saith Christ himself, Mat. xviii. 12. 'Whosoever shall exalt himself, shall be abased, and he that shall humble himself, shall be exalted,' even to honor here, if God sees it good for him; but howsoever to glory hereafter, which is the highest and best preferment; for, (Mat. v. 3.) 'Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.'

True humility stands in the being low in our own eyes, and being content to be low in the eyes of others. Get this *heart-humility*, and that will prevent those thoughts which would puff thee up in thyself, and those lofty carriages which tend to set thee up in the world. Let it be thy care to approve thyself in all good conscience towards God; and let him alone to take care of thy good name among men.

IV. 'Be as serviceable to others as thou canst.' As it was the meat and drink of our blessed Saviour to be 'doing good unto others,' so, let it be thy meat and drink, even thy chief delight,

to be doing all the *good* thou canst; let not any opportunity of doing *good* slip out of thy hands, but, as the wise man adviseth, Eccles. ix. 10. 'Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy might;' that is, whatsoever ability or opportunity of service God affordeth unto thee, either in thy general or particular calling, improve it with all care and diligence; endeavour with thy might to do all the *good* that thou possibly canst in thy generation.

This we find was the mind of our Saviour; for, saith he, John ix. 4. 'I must work the work of him that sent me, while it is day.' Now, what was the work of Christ, but to do all manner of *good*, as opportunity offered, whether by word or deed. The phrase used by the Evangelist, *Ergazesthai ta erga*, 'to work the work,' is an *Hebraism*, and implies 'a thorough acting, or doing a thing;' a doing it heartily, and that with all care and diligence. Thus should we make it our care and endeavour, yea, the main and principal work of our lives, to do all the *good* we can in the world, counting that the happiest time in which we can do *most good*. And surely, it is the greatest *honour* we are capable of here, to be by any way serviceable to God and his people, as that which will bring much peace and comfort to our souls and consciences. Be not a man for thyself; be a *common good:* be willing to serve thy generation; let it not be said of thee, 'It had been as well for this world, if this man had never been born.'

CHAP. XXVIII.

Of Mercy towards such as are in Misery; which implies both a compassionate Heart, and a helping Hand.

V. 'BE merciful towards such as are in misery,' Luke vi. 36. This mercifulness, or mercy, is such a compassion of the heart, whereby a man is a help and succour to others in their misery: so that true mercy hath in it two things.

1. Compassion, or laying to heart the miseries of others.

2. An inclination and readiness to succour and relieve them, according to their misery. It comprehends *affection* and *action;* the former being the fountain and foundation of the latter, and the latter the stream and demonstration of the former: so that in the compassion of the heart, and in the act of relief, consists the true *nature of mercy.*

I. The former we find often pressed in scripture; as Job vi. 14. 'To him that is afflicted, pity should be shewed by his friend.' 'Put on therefore,' saith the apostle, Col. iii. 12. 'as the elect of God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercy.' Which is a metonymical form of speech, often used in holy scripture, whereby is

meant *pity* and *compassion* towards them that are in misery, or affliction; yea, such a measure of it as affecteth the heart and bowels, and that with as true a touch and feeling, as if we were in the same case with them.

If we consider the nearness of *conjunction* and *communion* that one Christian hath with another, we may well be convinced of the equity of this duty; for we are all sons of one Father, all members of one body: In respect thereof, there should (nay, there ought) to be such a sympathy and compassion in the members of the mystical body, I mean among *Christians*, as there is in the members of the natural body. Now, we know that in the natural body, 'if one member suffer, all the members suffer with it.' as the apostle expresses it, 1 Cor. xii. 26. which place St. Austin in his tenth tractate on John explains, excellently shews the mutual compassion between the members of the natural body: 'Behold,' saith he, 'the foot treadeth on a thorn, and see how all the members condole it: the back bends itself, the head stoops, the tongue complains, as if itself were pricked; the eye searches it out, the hands do their best to pluck it out;' yea, every member of the body is compassionately affected with it. And surely, such a sympathy and compassion there ought to be among Christians, who are all members of one body, whereof Christ Jesus is the Head.

II. Thy compassionate heart must have a helping hand; for the nature of true mercy consists as well in the act of relief, as in compassion of the heart. Thou hast not done thy duty in pitying the distressed, unless thou likewise relieve them. As that faith which is without works doth not justify us: so, that pity which is alone without works, doth not justify our faith. In vain therefore dost thou boast of thine inward compassion, unless thou likewise afford thine outward contribution, which we find joined together, Deut. xv. 7. 'Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut thine hand against thy brother, but thou shalt open thine hand wide to him:' that is, Thou shalt give unto him freely and bountifully, contrary to the aforenamed shutting thy hand. For thine encouragement unto this kind of mercy,

1. Know, that *outward works of mercy* are sweet smelling sacrifices wherewith the Lord is *well-pleased*. These are the oblations which he *now* requires. The sacrifices of the *old law* are abolished and done away, ever since our blessed Saviour gave himself 'an offering and a sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour unto God.' The evangelical sacrifices which the Lord requires of us under the gospel, are the sacrifices of *prayer*, *praise* and *charity*; so that, if we will be offering up sacrifices acceptable and pleasing unto God, they must be either the calves of our lips, even the sacrifices of *prayer* and *praise*; or else the sacrifice of *charity*, which the apostle, in Phil. iv. 18. termeth, 'an odour of a sweet smell, a sacrifice acceptable and pleasing unto God.' The altar on which

this sacrifice is to be offered, is the back of the poor. What greater argument can there be to enforce this duty of *charity*, than to consider, that it is acceptable and pleasing unto God? For, what ingenuous Christian would do not that which is acceptable unto God?

2. We are not so much lords of our estates, as stewards, therefore ought not to appropriate all to ourselves, but communicate some part to the poor, to whom something out of our estates doth belong.

3. All *profession of religion* without *works of charity*, is but hypocritical; for this is 'pure religion and undefiled before God, to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction,' James i. 27. that is, The comforting and supporting such as are in want and misery, doth evidence the truth of religion.

4. Consider the benefit which follow and accompany our *works of charity;* for thereby we bring glory to God, adorn our Christian religion and profession, and not only make glad the hearts of the *poor*, whom we relieve, but likewise refresh our own souls, in that our *works of charity* will evidence, as the 'truth of our religion,' so likewise of our *faith;* for 'faith without works is dead;' it is not a living, but a dead faith, which manifests not his life by working.

Therefore, O young man, be persuaded for the future, to be more charitable, knowing it is not so much a mercy to have wherewithal *to do good*, as *to do good* with what we have. And let thy giving out be proportionable to what the Lord hath given to thee, 1 Pet. iv. 11. 'If any man minister, let him do it as of the ability which God giveth.' They who are rich in this *world's goods*, ought to be rich in *good works;* the greater thy *receipts* are, the greater ought to be thy *returns*.

CHAP. XXIX.

Shewing the Necessity of restoring ill-gotten Goods.

VI. 'CAREFULLY restore what thou hast stolen, or unjustly got.' It is very sinful to get things wrongfully, and no less to keep what is wrongfully gotten; therefore the law requireth restitution of stolen and ill-gotten goods; as Exod. xxi. 1. Lev. vi. 2, 3. &c. Restitution is not an arbitrary thing, left to our will *to do*, or, *not to do so*, but an act of justice, to the performance whereof we are bound by the express letter of the law. Whosoever he be that hath wronged another, either by detaining what he hath borrowed, or by getting by fraud or oppression, ought to make satisfaction, by restoring either the thing itself, or the value

and worth of it; yea, not only the bare value, but likewise the damage done to the person wronged by detaining his goods.

Q. What if the party be not able to make full satisfaction for the wrong he hath done?

A. If he be not in truth able to make full satisfaction, yet he must restore so far as he is able and his estate will reach, and God will accept the 'will for the deed,' according to that of the apostle, 2 Cor. viii. 12. 'If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not.'

2. He must humbly acknowledge the wrong he hath done. If satisfaction cannot be made by restitution, then it must be by humiliation.

3. He must shew himself willing to restore *whatever* he hath unjustly and fraudulently gotten, and promise satisfaction *whenever* God shall enable him thereunto.

Q. What if the party wronged be dead?

A. Then restitution ought to be made to his executors or administrators, or heirs; and if they cannot be found, then to the poor, making them his heirs: and thereby thou wilt turn thy debt into an alms: and in shewing thyself just, do a work of mercy.

What thou dost herein, let it be done speedily. As thy *repentance* must be speedy without delay, so must thy *restitution:* For, what true *repentance* can there be without *restitution?* Zaccheus, we read, upon his conversion made present restitution, Luke xix. 8. knowing repentance without it, was but counterfeit and vain. It is not sufficient to *purpose* or *promise* restitution, but it must be presently done, for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth; thou mayest either be taken from thy riches, or thy riches may be taken from thee, and thou thereby be altogether disenabled to restore according to thy purpose.

Though for the present thou mayest please thyself with thine ill-gotten goods, yet, if thy conscience be enlightened, and made sensible of the evil of sin, thou wilt find no quiet therein, until thou hast made restitution. Ill-gotten goods will be to thy conscience as the Canaanites were to that good land; it is said, 'the land groaned till it had spewed them out. So, thy conscience will travail with grief, till it be delivered of thy ill-gotten goods. Seneca tells us of a philosopher at Athens, who having bought a pair of shoes on trust, and afterwards hearing that the shoemaker was dead, flattered himself for a while with a conceit, that the money due for the shoes was his own, and that he should never be called upon for the same; but his conscience being afterwards awakened, he was so terrified with the thought of his injustice, that as one affrighted, he ran with all speed to the man's shop, and finding the door shut, he flung the money in at the window, saying, 'Though the good man be dead, yet the money

is due from me.' If an Heathen made such conscience of restoring whatsoever was another's, and not his own, how much more shouldst thou, who art a *Christian*, make conscience of restoring whatsoever thou hast stolen, or fraudulently gotten from another, and doth not properly belong unto thee.

Obj. Perhaps thou wilt say, I am willing to make restitution, but unwilling to have the thing known, because thereby my credit and reputation will be exceedingly blasted.

Ans. For the preservation of thy reputation, thou mayest make choice of some honest faithful feiend, who will deliver the money or goods, and conceal thy name. Be sure *restitution* be made one way or other of thy *ill-gotten goods*.

1. Because otherwise they will prove a moth, to consume the rest of thine estate.

2. It is the only way and means whereby thou canst make recompence and satisfaction, for the wrong thou hast done unto thy neighbour.

3. Common justice and equity requires restitution so far as thou art able. Cicero, and divers others among the heathens, by the light of nature, acknowledged as much. What a shame then must it needs be for Christians, who have the light of the gospel added to the light of nature, not to acknowledge and practice this necessary duty!

4. This is the fruit worthy of *repentance*, which we are commanded to bring forth, Mat. iii. 8. and which will evidence the truth of it. Hereby Zaccheus testified the truth of his repentance, Luke xix. 8. It is not thy confessing to God the wrong done to thy neighbour, nor thy mourning and sorrowing for the same, that will obtain pardon of the sin without restitution, so far as thou art able: where that is wanting, all thy sorrow and repentance will do thee little good. This was the judgment of St. Austin, confirmed by all divines to this day, that *Non remittitur peccatum nisi restituitur ablatum*; 'No remission of sin without restitution of goods or money, so far as the party is able.'

Hast thou therefore, O young man, in the time of thine apprenticeship, been unfaithful to thy master, and stolen any thing from him, or any other? As thou expectest to find mercy from God, and to obtain the pardon of thy sin, resolve forthwith to restore the same; otherwise it will prove not only a moth in thine estate, but the ruin of thy soul. If thou part not speedily with thine ill-gotten goods, thy soul is like to go for them; 'And what will it profit thee to save thy goods, and lose thy soul?'

CHAP. XXX.

Sheweth the Necessity of performing relative Duties.

VII. 'HAVE special regard to the duties thou owest to thy relations, wherein consisteth a great part of a Christian's work.' If God hath blessed thee with a family, let thy care be, that God may be honoured therein by a constant conscionable *performance of holy and religious duties*. *Relative duties* do more demonstrate piety and true godliness, than *general duties*. The *work of grace* in men's conversation, doth *appear much* in the duties of their relations: If therefore thou profess *godliness*, manifest the truth and power of it, in performing the duties of thy relations.

Whatsoever men may talk of godliness, except it appear in a considerable discharge of the duties of their relations, all their talk and profession of religion is to no purpose. Except the *servant* be diligent and faithful to his *master*, a *child* dutiful to his *parent*, a *wife* loving and obedient to her *husband*, all their profession of religion is vain. So, unless *masters*, *parents*, and *husbands*, be careful and conscionable in the discharge of the duties of their relations, all their talk of godliness is to no purpose.

Therefore, O young man, have special regard to thy *relative duties*: If thou be not good therein, thou art not good at all, what shew of goodness soever thou makest. A good *man*, but a careless *master*, careless of the souls of his *servants*; a good *man*, but a hard unkind *husband*; these cannot well stand together. Men are *really* what they are *relatively*; except thou art *relatively* good, thou art not *really good*. Be therefore exactly conscionable in the duties of thy relations. If thou art a *master*, a *governor* of a family, be just and merciful to thy *servants*, careful for the saving their souls. If thou art a *husband*, be kind and loving to thy *wife*, let all thy commands be in love, then will they be more cheerfully obeyed. If thou art a *father*, be careful in the education of thy children, 'bringing them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.' As God hath made them thy children by natural generation, do thou endeavour to make them his children by a religious education. Know that *relative duties* and *graces* do very much grace religion.

Q. What are those special relative duties which are incumbent upon masters and governors of families, in reference to those under their charge?

A. 1. 'Let your houses be daily perfumed by a morning and evening sacrifice of prayer and praise to God;' both which were appointed under the law, Exod. xxix. 28, 29. And this shadowed what was to be performed under the gospel. God renews his mercies to you every morning, and protects you every night from

manifold dangers whereunto you are subject; and can you be so ungrateful and unmindful of him, who is every moment so mindful of you, as not to offer up unto him a morning and evening sacrifice?

2. 'Let the word of God be frequently used in your families;' which is not only the foundation of faith, and the well-spring of saving wisdom, but also the ground of godliness, and the guide of practice, 'able to make you wise unto salvation,' 2 Tim. iii. 15. We cry out against the Pope and *popish clergy*, for locking up the Scriptures in an unknown tongue from the *laity*, not suffering them to have a Bible in their mother-tongue; whereas many masters among us deal much alike with those under their charge; who, though they do not lock up the scriptures *from* them, yet, they do not unlock them *to* them, by causing them to be read *amongst* them. Certainly, did you seriously consider the benefit that might redound to your servants by a frequent hearing of the word read, you could not but be more frequent therein. Are any of them addicted to *drunkenness*, *lying*, or *swearing?* who knows but upon hearing the threatenings in God's word denounced against those sins, they may for the time to come abhor and avoid the same? Are any of thy servants unprofitable and disobedient unto thee? who knows but upon hearing the duties of servants read out of the word of God, where they are commanded 'to be obedient to their masters in all things, and serve them, not with eye-service as men-pleasers, but as the servants of Christ, with singleness of heart;' as Eph. i. 5, 6. they may become more obedient and profitable unto thee? So that, methinks, for thine own good, as well as theirs, thou shouldst cause the word to be frequently read in thy family.

3. 'Set some time apart in every week to catechise those under thy charge, teaching them the chief principles of religion,' than which there is no better means to keep them from the errors of the times. If he be worse than an *infidel*, who provides not for the *bodies* of those in his family, what then is he who takes no care of their *souls*, neglecting to instruct them in the principles of the oracles of God?

Content not thyself with a dead distracted manner of serving God, but stir thyself to a lively spiritual performing those holy duties thou takest in hand. 'To draw near unto God with our bodies, and honour him with our lips, when our hearts and spirits are removed from him,' is no better than a mocking of God; which he abhors and detests.

V. 'As a means and help for the constant performing these family duties, have special care of the choice of thy yoke-fellow, that thou marry a virtuous woman, one who is related to Christ, at least one that liketh and approveth the best things.' If thy wife be not a promoter of godliness in thy family, she will be a

hinderer of it. The scripture in setting forth the wickedness of Jehoram, renders this as the reason of it, 'That he had the daughter of Ahab to wife,' 2. Chron. xxi. 6.

Therefore, O young man, in seeking after a wife, it will be thy wisdom,

1. 'To look more after righteousness than after riches; to enquire more after her piety, than after her portion; to know rather with what religion she is endued, than with what estate she is endowed.' Alas! what is the richest portion, the most exquisite beauty, and the rarest parts in comparison of a mind endued with grace and virtue? A wife, as well as a husband, is the greatest outward 'comfort or cross in the world,' so that to err in the choice of a wife, is in a manner to be undone for ever. Therefore O young man, be sure thou seek unto God by prayer, for his *direction* and *assistance* in this *great work*, upon which much of thy future *happiness* or *misery* doth depend.

2. 'Next to piety, prudence and discretion is to be looked at in a wife; For wisdom exceeds folly as much as light exceeds darkness,' Eccles. ii. 23. And indeed 'what is beauty without discretion, but as a jewel of gold in a swine's snout,' Prov. xi. 22. And Solomon, by way of commendation, setteth forth a prudent wife to be a special gift, and a principal blessing of God, such as excelleth all other temporal blessings whatsoever.

3. 'Marriage affection requires some external amiableness, that she be a pleasing person, in whom thou mayest delight;' though (as the wise man speaketh, Prov. xxxi. 30.) 'Favour be deceitful and beauty vain;' because they are subject, many ways, to decay and vanish away; yet, favour and beauty may serve for the rooting and settling of affection at first.

4. 'In regard that marriage is the foundation of a family and posterity, a portion is not to be contemned, though not chiefly to be desired.' Therefore in seeking a wife, let not *wealth* and *riches* be chiefly in thine eye, as if thou wert going about a purchase, and wert to wed not the *woman*, but her *wealth;* but look more to her *inward goodness*, than her *worldly goods*.

Lastly, For a conclusion to the whole, 'In the careful observation of these directions, give diligence to make thy calling and election sure.' It will not suffice me to press thee to do something that thou mayest have hope; I would persuade thee to thy whole duty, that so thou mayest have *assurance* that it shall *be well with thee;* And less than I have here advised thee to, will not suffice thee to make sure for everlasting. He must be an *universal Christian*, that will be an *afforded Christian*. There is as much required to assurance, as is required in the whole scripture.

Well, what sayest thou? Wilt thou henceforth adventure thy soul to unconjectural and deceitful hopes? Or, wilt thou set to it to make sure for heaven? What shall I say more to persuade thee?

Give me leave, ere I dismiss thee, to urge upon thee an argument or two. What ever thou hast to do here, make sure for hereafter. For,

1. 'Nothing temporal can be made sure.'

2. 'If things eternal be made sure, it is no great matter though things temporal remain at the greatest uncertainties.'

1. 'Nothing temporal can be made sure.' This world is a world of uncertainties: *The riches of it are uncertain riches*, 2 Tim. vi. 17. The pleasures of it are uncertain pleasures; worldly friends are uncertain friends.

The wheel of providence is ever turning: Now one is at the top of the wheel, and then another, and another; and he that was just now at the top, by and bye tumbles down, and the wheel runs over him. How often do rich men break, and poor men get up in their rooms, and then tumble down after them, and give place to him that comes next? To-day thou hast an estate, but who can tell what thou mayest have to-morrow? Such an uncertain world this is, and at such uncertainties are the things of it, and there is no preventing it.

It is good to be sure of something. Since earth can never be made sure, thou art the more concerned to make sure of heaven. To have all at uncertainties, both here and hereafter, is such a misery, as every one that is wise will do what he can to prevent.

2. 'If things eternal be made sure, it is no great matter though things temporal be at the greatest uncertainties.' This world is uncertain; a world of changes or disappointments, vexations and all kind of troubles: Why, let it be so; so heaven be sure, no matter for all those lower uncertainties.

Young man, thou art going forth into the world, how thou mayest prosper in it, notwithstanding all thy skill and care, God only knows: Who can tell what crosses thou mayest meet with in thy very *entrance*, that may dash all thy hopes? And if thou hast never so fair and hopeful a beginning, yet who knows what may be thy lot before the end of thy day? Why now wouldst thou get about all casualties and crosses, and at once be a conqueror of all the world? Wouldst thou have thy quiet and contentment out of the reach of winds and storms, and be able to live cheerfully in every condition? Make heaven sure, and it is done. Thou mayest then hoist up thy sails, commit thyself to the wind and seas, make on thy voyage, and never be appalled at the storms on the way: Whilst thou hast this assurance, thou shalt come safe to harbour, and not an hair of thy head perish.

Thus have you, dear youths, the desire and breathings of my soul after your happiness here, and blessedness hereafter, exprest in some useful directions suitable to your present state and condition, shewing you how to deport and carry yourselves both in your general and particular calling, that so you may please God in all

things here, and live with him in *everlasting* blessedness hereafter. Now, my hearty request to you is, that you will not content yourselves with a bare reading of them; but *resolve*, with the *assistance* of God's grace, to enter upon the real practice of them. And, Oh, that the Lord, who alone teacheth to profit, would please so to set them home upon your hearts, that they may tend to your spiritual good here, and eternal salvation hereafter.

O young men, you are now flowers in the bloom, you are those *first fruits* which should be offered to the Lord: Oh that you would now consecrate yourselves unto God and his service! Oh that, while you are young, you would, with Isaac, give yourselves to prayer and meditations; and, with Samuel, serve the Lord from your youth; and, with young Solomon, study to know and serve the God of your fathers; and, with Obadiah, fear the Lord from your youth; and, with young Josiah, do that which is right in the sight of the Lord. And, to these ends, with Timothy, from your youth addict yourselves to reading of the *scriptures*, which are *able to make you wise unto salvation.* Oh that you would set these men's lives as copies for your imitation, giving up yourselves entirely and unfeignedly to the Lord in a truly-gracious life!

O young men, you are now in your preparations for eternity; and therefore had need to be very watchful over yourselves, to 'see that you walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil,' Eph. v. 15, 16. Little do you consider how much depends upon *this* moment of time, which God for the present is pleased to vouchsafe unto you, even no less than the whole weight of eternity: Upon your well or ill-improving of your time and talent here, *depends* your *everlasting* condition, that estate which is to be for ever and ever. Oh what *folly* and *madness* then must it *needs* be in *you* to suffer your lust, or wicked companions to steal away this jewel, your precious time, which is more worth than all the world! Oh that for the future you would so live, *every day*, as those that live for *eternity!* It is sadly evident, that too many losing their first and tender years, in conclusion lose their souls also.

O dear youths, behold the arms of *free grace* are yet open to embrace you, if now you will abandon your youthful lusts, and cordially turn unto God, who is willing to forgive, yea, willing to forget all former miscarriages, upon the reforming your lives: 'Turn ye, turn ye, therefore from your evil ways, for why will ye die?' Ezek. xxxii. 11.

In this small treatise I have set before you life and death, heaven and hell, happiness and misery: Know assuredly, that as you chuse *now*, so shall you speed *hereafter.* Oh then, for the Lord Christ's sake, and for the sake of your poor souls, 'choose that good part which shall never be taken from you:' Walk in the

path which leadeth to life and happiness, that you may not perish, and be tormented with the devils in hell-fire to all eternity.

And now, my friend, I bid thee farewell. Take these words along with thee; let them ever be before thine eyes, and upon thine heart, and then go on thy way. Good counsel be with thee, that thou mayest guide thine affairs with discretion: And good success be upon thee, that thou mayest eat the fruit of thy good doings. I wish first that thy soul may prosper, and then I also wish that thy body may prosper, and thy family may prosper, and thy estate may prosper, as thy soul prospereth.

The Lord be with thee in all thou settest thine hand unto; the Almighty bless thee; let his blessing be upon thy labours; let his blessing be upon all thy substance: Let him help thee in thy work, and increase thy store: Let his sun shine upon thy tabernacle, and let the light of his countenance make glad thy heart; let him guide thee with his eye, hold thee in his hands, carry thee to his bosom, until he hath lodged thee safe into everlasting rest. *Amen.*

THE

Principles of the Christian Religion.

Explained to the capacity of the meanest; with practical applications to each head. Whereby the great and necessary duty of family-catechising may with much ease be performed.

Composed for the use of those only who need such an help.

The Epistle to Parents and Governors of Families.

THE chief end of this treatise being to contribute some help to parents and masters of families, in the discharge of that great and necessary duty of instructing their children and servants in the *principles* of the *Christian religion*: I knew no fitter persons to whom to dedicate this work, than to such who are chiefly concerned in the duty, and most obliged thereunto. And this I do the rather, that I may have an opportunity of stirring you up to a constant and conscionable performance of it; which you will find very advantageous to the spiritual good of your families here, and their eternal happiness hereafter. For,

1. By catechising, a good and sure foundation is laid. Now it is necessary that in all buildings, a good foundation be laid, lest, for want of it, the building come to ruin, as our Saviour expresseth, Mat. vii. 26, 27.

2. It is the easiest and most compendious way of conveying knowledge into the heads and hearts of your children and servants. Whence is it that many old people are so grossly ignorant of fundamental truths; even such as are necessary to salvation, but want of being catechised in their youth? And contrariwise, the most intelligent hearers are usually found to be such as have been timely instructed in the *principles* of *religion*.

3. Such as profess the faith, are thereby enabled to render a reason of the hope that is in them. For, a Catechism well composed, contains the sum and substance of all that a Christian is to believe.

4. Thereby the persons under your charge will be so well grounded in the truths, that they will not so easily be made a prey, either to *atheists* or *papists*, or other *seducers*. For such will be the more likely to hold fast the truths which they have been taught out of the *word of God*. Whereas we find by experience, that such as were never well catechised, are too soon drawn aside from the truth, to the embracing erroneous and heretical doctrines.

How should the consideration of these singular benefits of *fa-*

mily-instruction, stir up all parents and masters speedily to set upon the work, and to make conscience of it; without which, how can you expect God's blessing upon your family? How can you expect that your children and servants, who know not the God of their fathers, should serve him with honest and upright hearts? How can you expect that the gross ignorance which is naturally in your children and servants should be dispelled, and they enlightened with the knowledge of the true God, and of his Son Jesus Christ? And how can you expect that your children should be kept from running into all manner of sin and wickedness, if you do not train them up in the knowledge and fear of God, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? Certainly every parent and master hath as great a charge of the souls of those under his roof, as the minister hath of the souls of his flock. And a dreadful thing it must needs be, to be guilty of the blood of souls.

Let none plead for an excuse, the difficulty of the work, or their own insufficiency for the performing of it. For, if in the sincerity of your hearts you will put yourselves upon the discharge of it, God will graciously accept of your endeavours, and assist you in the doing of it. 'If there be a willing mind, it is accepted according to that a man hath, and not according to that he hath not,' 2 Cor. viii. 12.

If you shall think meet to make use of this following treatise, you will find that great and difficult work of catechising your children and servants, as easy as reading another's sermon. For, having propounded the question to each of them, and received the answer thereunto, as it is set down, you will find the several parts and branches of the answer explained to the capacity of the meanest, with some practical applications following the same: Which *explication* and *application*, you shall do well seriously to read over to them, when they have rehearsed the respective answers: Which, through God's blessing, may prove profitable both to yourselves, and those that hear you.

And I advise and desire, that you would set apart some time (once a week at least) for this exercise: either on the *Lord's day*, or else on some other day of the week, when you find you may best redeem time for it. O how much may an hour, or suppose but half an hour in a week, thus spent, tend to the edification of your own, and your families' souls!

It will be good and necessary, that you appoint the several persons in your families, to take their own times to learn an answer or two weekly, that so they may be ready to rehearse it to you on the time you appoint for catechising of them.

Though, in clearing the truths, I had often occasion given of confuting very many errors, both of Papists, Socinians, and others, yet, I purposely avoided it, because this treatise was drawn up only for the benefit of the younger and weaker sorts of Chris-

tians, especially of those in Wales: who being destitute of those many helps of knowledge we in these parts enjoy, did earnestly desire me to publish in both languages, a Treatise that should contain all the fundamental *principles* of *religion*, and that in a plain style and method, which, through God's help, having finished, I shall not cease, while I live, to implore his blessing on these poor endeavours of mine, that they may prove successful to the conviction, conversion, and consolation of all that shall read or hear it.

Your servant in all services,
for the salvation of your souls,
THO. GOUGE.

3 December, 1678.

The Principles of the Christian Religion, explained to the capacity of the meanest; with practical applications to each head.

1. Q. WHAT is every one most bound to know?

Ans. God and himself.

Explication. The knowledge of God is most necessary in divers respects.

1. 'Because it is a most excellent knowledge in itself;' Psalm. cxxxix. 6. For God being of all things the most excellent, knowledge of him must needs be most excellent: so as if any knowledge be necessary, this most of all.

2. 'It is most profitable to us;' John xvii. 3. By the knowledge of God, we understand how to go to God, how to expect all blessings from him, and how to trust on him in our greatest straits and dangers. Surely, if God were better known, he would be better trusted; *for they that know thy name, will put their trust in thee*, Psalm ix. 10.

Application. Let all that mind the peace and comfort of their own souls, labour after a clear knowledge of God; as by a diligent attending upon the ministry of the word preached, so by a frequent reading the holy scriptures, 'which are able to make us wise unto salvation, and to give wisdom to the simple;' Psalm xix. 7. And also, by fervent praying unto God for an understanding heart, to know him and the mysteries of the gospel.

2. 'Next to the knowledge of God, it is meet that we labour after the knowledge of ourselves.'

'Thereby we shall the better discern our miserable condition.' We are indeed most vile, wretched, sinful creatures; yet, we are naturally highly conceited of ourselves. All of us, till God do alter our minds and dispositions, savour much of Laodicea's self-conceit; Rom. iii. 19. Though in regard of our spiritual es-

tate, we be wretched and miserable, poor, blind and naked; yet we think that we are rich, and have need of nothing.

The advice therefore of our Saviour is seasonable for us; namely, that we pray for the spirit of illumination, whereby we may be brought to see and judge ourselves. Did we well know ourselves, we would quickly, with much shame, cast down our proud peacock's feathers, and say with Job, *I am vile, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes*, Job xlvi. 4.

2. Q. Where is this knowledge to be had?

A. In the word of God contained in the scriptures of the Old and New Testament.

Expl. 'That the scriptures are the word of God,' appeareth,

1. 'From the purity and holiness of the matter,' which has the very image of the holy God upon them.

2. 'From the harmony of sundry and several pen-men,' none contradicting another, but all consenting and conspiring in substance and circumstance, as guided by one spirit, which was divine.

3. 'From the profundity of the matter contained in them.' Such mysteries are therein contained, as surpass the depth of man's capacity; yea, which make the very angels to stand at amaze, 1 Pet. i. 12.

4. 'From the simplicity, yet majesty of the style;' which contribute good evidence to their being divine.

5. 'From the testimony which is given to it.' This is both *external* and *internal; external*, the miracles done by the pen-men, with the constant approbation of the church in all ages; yea, and of many adversaries. *Internal*, by the inward operation of the Spirit of God, which is the most sure and infallible of all.

Applic. 1. 'By way of application this may inform us, what just cause we have to detest the religion of the papists, who forbad the laity to read the scriptures; yea, who debar them from the same.' In 1 Sam. xiii. 19. we read, that when the Philistines had the Israelites in bondage, one policy to detain them therein was, not to suffer a *smith* in the land, lest the Hebrews should make them swords and spears to fight against them. The like policy hath been for a long time, and is still used by the Papists, to continue the people in blindness and ignorance, that they might not discover the abominations of their religion; for they suffer them not to have a Bible in their own language, but lock it up in an unknown tongue, lest from thence they should fetch arguments against their foolish tenets and practices.

2. 'This may exhort us highly to prize the scriptures;' and to bless God that we have them amongst us, and that in our language: whereby all sorts, both poor as well as rich, may read their Father's mind in their mother-tongue.

3. 'Be exhorted to read and study the scriptures.' And that

you may read them with the more holy awe, delight and profit, look on them *as the epistle of God*, wherein he hath written down to the world what his mind is; both what he would have them to do here, and what he intends to do with them hereafter. If you should hear of a letter written from heaven, directed to all the men of the world, subscribed by the Lord's own name, Jehovah, and sent down to us by the hand of an angel, who would not be greedy to read it? Such a letter are the scriptures, sent us down from God; not by the hand of an angel, but by the hand of his Son. Read them as you would read such a letter.

But before you read, be sure you beg of God,' that by his Spirit he would enlighten your mind, to the understanding of his will therein contained.' And after reading, ' fail not to meditate thereon,' which will be a special means to help both your understanding and memory.

3. *Q.* How do the scriptures set forth God?

1. *A.* ' In his nature;' Exod. iii. 14. John iv. 24.

2. ' In his person,' Mat. xxviii. 19.

3. ' In his properties,' Exod. xxxiv. 6.

4. ' In his works,' Rom. i. 20.

Being to speak largely of God, it will be expedient, first to prove the *being of God.* We must understand, ' That there is a God,' before we inquire ' what God is.'

I. Now, ' That there is a God,' is evident, ' From the glorious fabric of heaven and earth, with all the glorious creatures therein:' which glorious building could never have been, if it had not had an omnipotent builder. And ' from the powerful, wise, harmonious government of the world;' which evidently points us to a divine over-ruling providence; ' and from the general sense and consent of nations.'

Applic. 1. Seeing there is a God, then all *Atheists* are justly to be reproved: of which there are several sorts.

1. ' Some are atheists in opinion and judgment; concluding, or at least supposing, that there is no God.' Having given up themselves to the satisfying their base lusts, that they might not be crossed therein, but have an uncontrolable liberty to commit all manner of sin and wickedness, they would persuade themselves that there is no God.

2. ' There are atheists in wish and desire;' though they will not, for shame of the world, say in plain terms, ' There is no God; yet, in their hearts they wish and desire there were no God at all to take vengeance on their iniquity.' But let such know, that their atheistical wishes and desires are all known to God, who will one day call them to an account for the same.

3. ' Some are atheists in practice,' such are all wicked and ungodly men, who in their judgments acknowledge God, but in

their works deny him, living as if there were no God, nor heaven, nor hell. Of which number are,

First, 'Such as please themselves in their speculative filthiness, and contemplative uncleanness, and bless themselves in it;' which must needs argue a secret atheism lurking in their hearts, having no apprehension of God's omnisciency. Let such know, that the secret thoughts of their hearts are as well known to God, as their outward actions. 'Thou hast possessed my reins, and understandest all my thoughts,' saith David, Psalm cxxxix. 2, 13.

Secondly, 'Such as take a liberty to sin in secret, because they are out of sight of men.' Thus the murderer and adulterer are brought in by Job, encouraging themselves in their wickedness, saying, 'No eye seeth us,' Job xxiv. 14. Surely, for any to hide their sins from his eye, who indeed is all eye, and whose eye is over all; it must need argue a secret atheism in their hearts, as if God was not present in all places.

Thirdly, 'Such as live in the frequent omission of holy duties;' As reading the scriptures, praying either in secret or with their families, and the like. Though they know, and cannot but acknowledge, that they are duties commanded by God in his word, and commended by the examples of godly men; yet how many do live in the neglect of them! which is a product of practical atheism.

Fourthly, 'Such as though they seem to make conscience both of public, private and secret duties of piety, yet are altogether careless of the manner of performing them:' praying as if they prayed not, and hearing as if they heard not; whereby they plainly discover a secret atheism in their hearts: for did they truly believe God's all-seeing presence, and that he is a searcher of the heart, privy to every wandering thought in praying, hearing, and the like, they could not rest satisfied, as they do, in the bare outward performing of holy duties.

Fifthly, 'Such as live openly in a wicked and ungodly course of life,' though in words they may acknowledge a God, yet by their works they deny him; for they live as if there were no God. Yet will the hand of God assuredly find them out sooner or later; and then will they be enforced to say, 'Verily there is a God that judgeth the earth;' Psal. lviii. 11. who hath prepared a hell of horror and darkness for all such ungodly atheists.

II. This truth, That there is a God should stir us up to the practice of sundry duties; as,

1. 'To humble ourselves for these cursed seeds of atheism that are in our hearts, and with our utmost to endeavour to suppress and keep them under; that they may not sprout forth in us.

2. 'To make choice of the only true God for thy God and portion for thy chiefest good and happiness;' which in truth is essential to Christianity. Set thine heart on him, let him be the greatest

desire, the greatest delight, and the greatly beloved of thy soul; so that thou mayest say with David, Psal. lxxiii. 25. 'Whom have I in heaven but thee! There is none upon earth that I desire besides thee.'

3. Walk before God in all good conscience: To this end.

First, 'Begin each day with God;' awake with him in the morning, lift up your soul in prayer and thanksgivings unto God, for that comfortable rest and refreshment he hath vouchsafed unto you the night past: And beg of him that he would so strengthen you by his grace, that you may glorify him that day in your whole conversation. And then let forth your hearts in a serious meditation of God, or of his *words* or *works* and *glorious attributes*. If holy thoughts do not first take place in your hearts, the Devil will be sure to cast in some vain, worldly, wanton thoughts and imaginations.

Secondly, 'Walk with God all the day long;' set him before you, and consider his all-seeing presence about you, wherever you are, and whatsoever you are doing; which will be a special means to restrain you from sin, so to provoke you unto holiness.

Thirdly, 'Close the day with God, by a serious examination, how you have that day discharged the duties of your places, callings and relations:' How you have behaved yourself both in secret and in company, how you have performed your duties of devotions, whether with seriousness, or slightness of heart and spirit: What savoury thoughts you have had that day, *of God*, *of Christ*, or *of eternity?* Whether you have not omitted some known duty, or adventured on the committing some known evil. And thus go over the several passages of the day, whereby you will be better acquainted with your spiritual estate, and kept from going on in a course of sin without repentance.

Having thus examined yourselves, before you go to bed, be sure to make your peace with God, by an humble confessing of your sins, and hearty praying unto him for the pardon and forgiveness of them, in and through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, and resolving on more watchfulness for the future. Should you lie down in your sins unrepented of, and be called out of this world that night, O how sad and dreadful would your condition be to all eternity!

Having, by several arguments, proved the existence and being of God, and made some application thereof to ourselves; I come now to treat of God, according to his *nature*, *persons*, *properties* and *works*.

4. *Q.* What is God?

A. God is a spirit of infinite perfection.

Explic. For the better clearing this answer, I shall briefly shew you.

1. What is meant by Spirit.

2. What by perfection.

3. Why *infinite* is added to God's perfection.

I. For the first, What is meant by Spirit? namely, 'A spiritual substance;' so as the word *Spirit* importeth two things of God.

First, 'That he is a substance,' hath a real being: 'He that cometh unto God, must believe that God is.'

Secondly, 'That his being is spiritual.' Substances are the highest of beings, and *Spirits* are the highest and noblest of substances; most excellent, pure, potent, *&c.* And therefore are the fittest to represent the incomprehensible God to our narrow conceptions, whereupon God is described to be a *Spirit;* John iv. 24.

II. Perfection implieth two things.

1. 'A freedom from all manner of defects.'

2. 'All manner of excellencies.' God therefore is said to be *a perfect Spirit*, or *Spirit of perfection;* because, as there is no defect in him, so all excellencies and perfections are found in him.

III. *Infinite* is added to *perfection*, to shew, that there is no measure or stint to set God's perfection; his greatness can neither be measured nor comprehended; Job xi. 7.

So that this description of God, that he is 'a Spirit of infinite perfection;' though it be short, yet it is so full, as it distinguisheth God from all things that are in heaven, or in earth; yea, from all things that may be imagined, or indeed are.

First, In that God is *a substance*, and *a real Being*, he is distinguished from all *imaginations* and *phantasies*.

Secondly, In that God is a *spiritual substance*, he is distinguished from all bodily substances. Bodies have indeed a being, and are substances, but gross substances, subject to many infirmities and decays. God being a *Spirit*, is free from all such things.

Thirdly, *God's perfection* doth distinguish him from all *imperfect spirits*, as from 'the souls of all evil men, and from *devils*.' These are indeed *spirits*, and in regard of the kind of their substances, they have an excellency above bodies. But sin, which hath seized on them, is a defect and imperfection, to which the Spirit of perfection is not subject.

Fourthly, 'The infiniteness of God's perfection,' doth distinguish him from other spirits, that are in their kind, *perfect*, as are the *glorious angels*, and *glorified souls of saints:* Heb. xii. 23. But though these are *spirits*, and *perfect spirits*, yet their perfection is limited; they have a certain measure and stint: whereas God's perfection is beyond all measure, without all stint; it is *infinite*.

Applic. 'Seeing God is a Spirit,' learn hence, first, 'Not to frame any image of God, not so much as in your minds,' fancy not God to be as man, or as any other creature.

2. 'Learn to worship him in spirit and in truth.' Heart-worship is the heart of worship. Bodily-worship there must be also;

the hands, the eyes, the tongue, the knees, must all be exercised in the worship of God, but the soul is so to be the chief, that all is nothing without it. Lift up the hands and the eyes, bow the knees, but be sure especially, the heart be lifted up, that the soul be bowed down and poured forth before the Lord. Pray with understanding, pray with affection; let your faith, love, desires, hopes, all join in offering up your prayers.

'Seeing God is of infinite perfection,' learn,

1. 'To hate and abhor sin, the odiousness and malignity whereof is aggravated by the infinite majesty of that God, against whom it is committed.' Thou that wilt fear to affront a mortal prince, how darest thou to affront an infinite God? What mad souls are drunkards, swearers, or other sinners, a company of vile worms, to set themselves in rebellion against the incomprehensible God! If the wrath of a king be as messengers of death, Prov. xvi. 14. How darest thou provoke the King of kings?

2. 'Learn to fear before him,' and to live under a constant awe and reverence of him, especially when you draw nigh unto him to worship him.

3. 'Let there be no limits or bounds set to your affections to him.' Love him with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your might. Reach up to the highest you can.

You cannot love him infinitely, but you must love him superlatively: he is a God of infinite perfection, and infinitely worthy to be loved.

This shall suffice to have spoken of God's nature.

The persons are next to be considered.

5. *Q.* How many Gods are there?

A. There is one only true God, but distinguished into three persons; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which are equal in power and glory.

Expl. Here are four things to be cleared.

I. 'That there is but one only God.'

II. 'That there are three persons in the Godhead.'

III. 'That the Son and the Holy Ghost are God, as well as the Father.'

IV. 'That all the persons are equal in power and glory.'

I. 'That there is but one only God,' the scripture plainly expresseth, Deut. vi. 4. 'Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord.' 1 Cor. viii. 4, 5. 'We know,' saith the apostle, 'that there is none other God but one. For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth (as there be gods many, and lords many) but to us there is but one God.'

II. 'That there are three persons in the Godhead.' Though there be but one God in substance and essence, yet are there three distinct Persons subsisting in that one Godhead. This is one of the greatest mysteries of our Christian religion. A mystery not

to be comprehended, yet ought to be believed by us, because it is so clearly and plainly laid down in the word of God; as, 1 John v. 7. 'There are Three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these Three are One, in nature and essence.' Here is a Trinity proclaimed with their names; *Father*, *Word*, and *Holy Spirit*. Where, by the *Word* is meant *Jesus Christ*, who is called the *Word*, because as we by our words express our mind and meaning, so God by his Son, hath made known his mind and will unto his church. There is another clear proof of the trinity of Persons, in that commission which our blessed Saviour gave to his apostles before his ascension into heaven; 'Go teach all nations, and baptize them in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' Where you have the names of the blessed Trinity writ, as it were, in fair and legible characters.

III. 'That the Son and Holy Ghost are God, as well as the Father.'

1. 'That Christ, the second Person, is God,' evidently appears: First, 'In that he is often styled GOD in scripture;' as Isa. ix. 6. where he is called 'the mighty God,' and Rom. ix. 5. 'God blessed for ever;' and John i. 1. 'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God;' that is, Jesus Christ, who is often in scripture, styled the *WORD*, was God. *Secondly*, 'The essential properties of God are often attributed to him in scripture;' as *eternity*, *omnisciency*, and the like; Rev. i. 8. John xxi. 17. *Thirdly*, 'The works and miracles which he wrought when he was upon earth, declared him to be God;' John v. 36. John x. 25.

2. 'That the Holy Ghost is God;' appeareth, *First*, 'Because the name of God is given to him;' Acts v. 3, 4. where Peter reproving Ananias for lying to the Holy Ghost, said, 'That he lied not to men, but to God.' *Secondly*, 'The works proper to God are attributed in scripture to the Holy Ghost;' as the 'works of creation,' Gen. i. 2. Job xxvi. 13. So likewise, 'the work of regeneration;' John iii. 5. 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Now, who can do these great things but God? *Thirdly*, 'The essential properties of God are attributed to the Spirit,' as *eternity*; Heb. ix. 14. where he is called *the eternal Spirit*: *omnisciency*, knowing all things; as John xiv. 26. *Omnipresence*; as, Psalm cxxxix. 7. 'Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?' Yea, 'the Spirit can foretell all things;' 1 Tim. iv. 1. Men and devils may guess at, but none besides God can indeed foretell things to come.

IV. 'That all the Persons are equal in power and glory,' not one excelling another, but are all co-equal in their divine perfections and attributes: so that one of them is not greater, nor more glorious than another. 'Though there be one Person of the Fa-

ther, another of the Son, and another of the Holy Ghost; yet the Godhead of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, is all one; the glory equal, the majesty co-eternal;' as it is in Athanasius's creed.

Applic. 'Seeing there is but one only true God,' this may serve to reprove,

1. The Papists, who seem to set up divers gods besides the *true God;* as to pass other *instances* in the *extravagant power* of the Pope.

1. The *virgin Mary*, whom they make a goddess, preferring her before Christ, by praying to her to command her Son to do what they desire.

2. 'They make all the departed saints gods, by praying unto them:' as though they knew the secrets of men's hearts, as though they were *present* every where: which are *things* proper to God alone, and not *communicated* to any *creature*, either *angels* or *saints*.

2. 'This serves for the reproof of many carnal Protestants,' who, though in words they *profess* but *one God*, and give *outward worship* only to *him*, yet do they set up many *idols* in their *hearts;* and so make to themselves more gods than one.

Some *men* make *carnal pleasures* their *god*, giving *themselves* up to the satisfying *their lusts*, as all *voluptuous persons* do. Some *men* make their *worldly riches* their *god*, setting *their hearts* upon them, and putting their *trust* and *confidence* in them, which is *idolatry;* and therefore the apostle calleth covetousness *idolatry*, Col. iii. 5. Some again make *their belly their god*, by giving themselves up to the satisfying their *fleshly appetite*, as all *gluttons* do. The truth is, there are few in the world, who do not make to themselves some other gods, besides the *true God*, to which they sacrifice their chief affections and desires.

What a base and unworthy thing is it for Christians, who in words acknowledge the only True God, to be their God, yet in truth do make so many other gods to themselves?

3. 'The knowledge of the mystery of the Trinity tendeth much both to the honour of God, and to our own good.'

First, 'It tendeth much to the honour of God,' in that he is thereby distinguished from all false gods. True it is, that God's incommunicable properties, and divine works, do distinguish him from all others; for there is none in heaven, or in earth, *eternal*, *almighty*, *omnipresent*, *omniscient*, but God only: yet, idolaters have imagined their false gods to be so: But, it never came into the heart of any idolater to imagine his God to be One and Three; one, in nature, and three, in persons. This is such a mystery, as in the opinion of idolaters themselves, none of their idols can be like to Jehovah.

Secondly, 'The knowledge of this mystery of the Trinity, as it tends to the honour of God, so, to our own good.' For,

'It shews the ground of God's Fatherhood,' how he is *our Father;* namely, in and through Jesus Christ. For, God being a Father by nature to his Son Jesus Christ, by reason of this he becomes through grace to be a Father to such as believe in Christ, as John i. 12.

Hitherto of the nature of God, and trinity of Persons, His properties follow.

6. *Q.* What are the properties of God?

A. The properties of God are, 'certain excellencies attributed and applied unto him, for our better apprehending of him, as eternity, unchangeableness, omnipotency, wisdom, holiness, justice, goodness, truth,' &c.

Explic. For the clearer understanding the properties of God, we must take notice, that there are two kinds of them, *viz. Incommunicable*, and *Communicable.*

'Incommunicable properties are such as are so proper unto God alone, as, in no respect, they can be attributed to any other.' 'In them none is like unto the Lord,' Psalm cxiii. 5. So as he to whom any of them is attributed, may be known to be a God, the only true God.

'Communicable properties, are such as may be communicated or attributed and applied to creatures, as appertaining to them:' Thus men may be holy as God is Holy, just as he is Just, &c.

These following are some of God's incommunicable properties. As,

1. *Eternity*, 'To be without beginning or ending. God had no beginning, nor shall ever have an end; 'but is God from everlasting to everlasting;' Psalm. xc. 2.

Applic. 'This may instruct us by faith to depend on God for our wives and children:' though we ourselves are mortal, and may be suddenly taken away before we have made competent provision for them, yet God is Eternal: and therefore having commended our surviving children to his fatherly care and providence, we may with confidence rest on him, for a comfortable supply of all needful good things for them, Gen. l. 24. 'I die,' said Joseph, 'but God will surely visit you with his mercy and loving-kindness.' The like may every believing parent, on his death-bed, say to his children, 'I am going out of this world, but though I die, yet the God of all comfort lives, who will in a special manner be your God and Father, and take care of you,' according to his gracious promise; Jer. xlix. 11. 'Leave thy fatherless children, I will preserve them alive; and let thy widows trust in me, or rely on me,' having undertaken the care and charge of them.

II. 'Another property of God is, That he is unchangeable;' the same without any alteration. God is unchangeable in his *essence*, Exod. iii. 14. In his *counsels* and *purposes*, Psalm xxxiii. 11.

In his gracious *promises*, which are not *yea and nay*, various and uncertain, but *yea and amen.*

Applic. 1. 'God's unchangeableness instructeth us, what use to make of the promises in God's word, to his people of old, namely, To apply them to ourselves, with as strong confidence, as if they had been made to us in particular, if our condition be the same with theirs.' The ground of this application is taken from God's immutability, and impartial manner of dealing. The same God that he hath been to any of his people of old, the same he is to all.

1. 'As God's unchangeableness administereth grounds of comfort to the faithful, so doth it afford matter of terror to all impenitent sinners:' for, Hath God threatened such and such dreadful judgments against notorious sinners? Hath he in former ages rained fire and brimstone from heaven on Sodom and Gomorrah, for their gluttony and drunkenness? Did such a trembling seize on Belshazzar, as he was drinking with his princes and concubines, that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another? Oh then, what cause have the whoremongers, drunkards, swearers, and such like sinners in these days, to fear and tremble, lest the like terrible judgments of God should fall on them, in the midst of their sins, and take them away in the act of their wickedness!

Yea, though thou be a child of God, yet, if thou commit any gross and scandalous sin, such as tendeth highly to the dishonour of God, and the scandal of thy religion and profession, thou mayest justly expect some imminent judgment from God, as David met with on the like occasion. For, God being unchangeable, hates sin in his own children now as formerly; and will shew himself as just in executing his wrath on wilful transgressors as formerly.

III. 'Another incommunicable property of God is omnipotency, whereby he is able to do all things possible.' Great is the power which some creatures have above others; but no creatures, no, not the angels, are Almighty, able to do any thing; but God is: who, *by weak means*, *without means*, yea, *against means*, can do what he pleaseth: *With God nothing is impossible*, Luke i. 37.

Applic. 1. 'Seeing God is Almighty, how doth it concern every one of us to beware, lest by our sinning we provoke his wrath against us.' 'Do ye provoke the Lord to anger?' saith the apostle, *Are ye stronger than he?* 1 Cor. x. 22. No man in his wits will provoke an enemy that is stronger than himself, whom he knows to be able to crush him.

2. 'The almighty power of God giveth us encouragement to flee unto him by praying in all our wants and necessities.' To whom should we then seek for *relief*, but unto him who is only able to help us in all our straits, to deliver us out of all our dangers, to support us under all our trials and temptations?

3. 'To trust in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and that for all things, at all times, and in all conditions?' Isa. xxvi. 4. The prophet presseth this duty upon this very ground, *Trust ye in the Lord for ever, for in the Lord Jehovah is everlasting strength.*

Now followeth some of God's communicable properties; as,

1. *Wisdom:* He is infinite in wisdom; in which respect. *All the treasures of Wisdom are said to be in him*, Col. ii. 3. A *treasure* notes abundance, but *treasures* speaks superabundance, whereby he excels all the wisdom of men.

Applic. 1. 'Is God infinite in wisdom? then when thou lackest wisdom to help thee out of any straits thou art in, or any difficulties, ask this wisdom of the God of wisdom,' James i. 5. Pray as Solomon did, *for a wise and understanding heart.*

2. 'Trust upon his infinite wisdom to guide and help you out of all your straits and dangers.'

II. 'God is infinite in holiness:' therefore he is called, *The holy One*, Hos. xi. 9. By way of eminency and excellency, surpassing all others in holiness.

Applic. How doth this speak terror and amazement?

1. 'To all wicked and profane persons, who live under the power and practice of iniquity,' than which nothing is more contrary to the nature of God: who being an holy God, hates every sin with a perfect hatred. Let such know, that if they live and die impenitently in their sins, their condition will be sad and dreadful to all eternity; 'For they shall in no wise enter into heaven, which is an inheritance undefiled,' 1 Cor. vi. 9. 1 Pet. i. 4.

I know many are apt to flatter themselves with a conceit, that though their lives are bad, yet their hearts are good; whereby they do but cozen and cheat their own souls. 'For a good tree cannot but bring forth good fruit.' If their hearts were so good as they pretend, surely their lives would be better. Therefore deceive not yourselves, for if your lives be wicked and unclean, your hearts are much more.

2. 'This speaks terror to all such as scoff at holiness, and deride such as make a profession of it.' Surely, such men have attained to the heighth of wickedness: whereupon David sets them in the *devil's highest form*, and makes them doctors of the chair; 'Who sits in the seat of the scornful,' Psalm i. 1. Little do such think, that the great and holy God takes these scoffs and injuries done to them, as done unto himself. Did ever any mock at God and prosper?

I know many are ready to reply, that they never reproached or derided any of God's holy ones for their holiness; but only a company of hypocritical professors, who pretend to holiness, but are perfect hypocrites. But, what if those whom you count *hypocrites*, be in the number of God's *holy ones*, (for you are but men and may be mistaken) how sad is your case like to be? hear your

doom pronounced by Christ, 'Whoso shall offend one of these little ones, which believe in me, it were better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and that he were drowned in the depth of the sea.'

Whereas many good Christians, from a sense of that corruption which they feel working in them, do question, whether they have any true holiness at all; let such for their comfort seriously consider these two things.

1. 'That a sight and sense of inward corruption is some evidence of the truth of grace, and life of holiness in us.' It is something of holiness to hate and mourn over iniquity: whilst thou mournest that thou art such an unclean thing, thank God thou hast so much holiness, as to set thee a mourning and lamenting that thou hast no more.

2. 'Consider that the Lord doth not now under the gospel, exact of us perfect holiness,' which consisteth in a personal and perfect conformity to the image and will of God; which is impossible to our corrupt nature, and was never found in any mere man since the fall of Adam; but he accepteth of our *evangelical holiness*, which consisteth, as in a sincere desire and earnest endeavour after holiness, so in an hearty grief and sorrow for the corruption we feel stirring in us, and in striving to keep down the power of it. In a word, this is the holiness which God now accepteth for *evangelically perfect;* that we hate sin, and love holiness, that we desire and endeavour to mortify the flesh and the corruption of it, and labour to serve God in true holiness and righteousness all the remaining part of our lives: and, as we fall into any sin, that we speedily rise again by true and unfeigned repentance; engaging ourselves in the strength of Christ, to a greater watchfulness against sin for the time to come.

III. 'God is a just God,' He is said to be *most just*, Job xxxiv. 17. that is, just in the highest degree; yea, just above all degrees. Indeed his providential actings are oft-times above our comprehension; in which respect, 'his ways are said to be in the sea, and his path in the great waters,' Psalm lxxvii. 19. Yet is he righteous in all those actions, though the righteousness of them doth not appear to our human reason.

Applic. This attribute of God may convince many of that groundless error, and vain conceit, which is deeply rooted in their hearts; namely, 'That God is all and only mercy,' and thereupon encourage themselves in their wicked and ungodly courses, but let such know, that though the Lord be merciful, yet he is likewise just: yea, so just, as he can no more cease to be just, than he can cease to be God. And therefore where the scripture doth most of all set forth the mercy of God, we find something of the justice of God; as in that place, Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7. 'The Lord God merciful and gracious, long-suffering, abundant in goodness and truth;'

then followeth this passage concerning the justice of God, *and will by no means clear the guilty:* as if he had said, Though the Lord be a God merciful and gracious, to all poor penitent sinners; yet will he be just too, and will not clear such as shall go on impenitently in their sins.

IV. 'Another property of God, is his goodness,' which is so great as cannot be expressed, so much as cannot be measured; in a word, it is transcendent beyond all comparison which the Lord himself implieth, Exod. xxxiv. 6. where he proclaims himself *abundant in goodness.*

Applic. The consideration of the infinite goodness of God doth exceedingly aggravate our sins, in that we have committed them against so good a God, so bountiful a Lord and Master, who hath followed us with his loving-kindness all our days. Thus did the Lord aggravate the sins of his people of old, Deut. xxxii. 6. 'Do ye thus requite the Lord, O foolish people and unwise?'

2. 'How should the consideration of God's infinite goodness work up our hearts to a superlative love of him?' How should it engage us to love him, as with the choicest, so with the highest degree of love! and, as our Saviour adviseth, Mat. xxii. 36. 'with all our hearts, with all our souls, and, with all our might?'

I know, many Christians, who do love in truth, are apt to question whether they do or no, because they find their affections so strongly set upon worldly things.

But let such take notice, that there is a two-fold love, namely, *a sensible love*, which is most felt, being drawn out by sensible objects, and *appreciative* or *rational love*, when we set a high value on the object of our love, preferring it above all other things. Dost thou thus love God? Wilt thou prize him above all, and seek him above all? And art thou willing to part with all for him? this is sincere love.

3. 'The goodness of God should engage us to obedience, and quicken us to a more close and exact walking with God.' What should we not do for his great name, who hath done such wonderful things for us? 'Labour we to imitate God in this attribute of goodness.' As he is good, and doth good, so it is our duty, and will be our wisdom to be as good, and to do as much good as possibly we can. Art thou a magistrate, and intrusted with power? make it thy design how to improve thy power; as to the glory of God, so to the good of thy country. Art thou a minister of the gospel, and hast thou a charge of souls? lay out thy time and strength in doing all the good thou canst, to the souls of the people committed to thy charge. Study how thou mayest promote their spiritual welfare. Hath God blessed thee with a liberal portion of this world's goods? 'As thou hast opportunity, do good unto all, especially unto the household of faith.' Yea, not only embrace opportunities of doing good, but likewise seek out

for them. And let thy givings out be in some measure suitable to what God hath given unto thee: 'For to whomsoever much is given, of him much shall be required;' Luke xii. 48.

If thou art a poor man, and lookest on thyself as unable to do good unto others, yet mayest thou stir up others to do good; yea, and do much good thyself by an holy, humble life and conversation; by which thou wilt not only stop the mouths of the enemies of godliness, but add a lustre and credit to thy religion and profession. In a word, let the doing of good in our several places, callings and relations, be the business and employment of our lives; accounting that day lost in which we have done no good, either directly or preparatorily. And when we have done all, let us be so far from thoughts of meriting any thing from God, by any good we have done, that we acknowledge it as one of our chiefest mercies, that God hath honoured us with doing any good in our generation.

V. The last property I shall mention, is, 'The truth of God.' In which respect he is called *The true God*, John xvii. 3. And *The Lord of truth*, Psalm xxxiv. 15. Yea, he styleth himself, *Abundant in truth*, Exod. xxxiv. 6. 'The truth of God,' notes,

1. *His reality*, that he is very God, God indeed, in opposition to false and feigned gods, according to his name, Exod. iii. 4. 'I am that I am.'

2. *His veracity*, That he speaks truth, and cannot lie: Every thing is what God saith it is. That which God saith is good, is good indeed: that which God saith is evil, is evil indeed. And every thing shall be what God saith shall be. He is faithful in his promises, true in his threatenings; not a word that God hath spoken shall go unaccomplished.

Appli. 'This speaks terror to all wicked and impenitent sinners:' for the Lord being a God of truth, whatsoever judgment he hath threatened in his word, shall certainly be executed in his appointed time. Hath God in his word threatened, that 'neither fornicators, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, shall inherit the kingdom of God?' hath God said, 'That all wicked and impenitent sinners shall be turned into hell?' even so shall it certainly be. Thou that livest and diest an impenitent sinner, shall as surely go to hell, as God is in heaven. Tremble sinner, tremble, tremble and turn; or else thou diest without remedy.

Thus far of the *divine nature*, *persons* and *properties*; the works of God remain farther to be declared.

7. *Q.* To what heads may the works of God be brought?

A. The works of God may be brought to two heads: namely, *creation* and *providence*.

8. *Q.* What is the works of creation?

A. God's making all things by his word, of nothing, in six days, very good.

Expl. Here are five things to be explained.

1. 'What is meant by God's making things at the beginning?' Namely, *His creating them.* To *create*, is to give a being to things that never were, and that out of nothing. In this respect it is said; Gen. i. 1. 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;' that is, When there was nothing at all, no not any matter, out of which things might be made. So that all the things which at first God made, were most properly created, and made of nothing.

2. 'What things did God make at the beginning:' namely, *All things.* Thus the Apostle expressly avoucheth, Col. i. 16. 'By him All things were created;' and for farther clearing his mind and meaning, thus distinguisheth that general phrase; 'All things that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible,' &c.

3. 'By what did God make all things;' namely, *By his word;* Gen. i. 3, 6. 'God said, Let there be light, and there was light. Let there be a firmament, and it was so.' And Psalm xxxiii. 6. 'By the word of the Lord were things made.' By God's word we understood his *will: He said*, that is, He willed that such things should be: he willed that there should be light, and it was so.

4. 'For the time in which God made all things,' Exod. xx. 11. 'In six days the Lord made heaven and earth.' God could have made all things, as they were made, in a moment; for he standeth not in need of means to work by, or of time to work in. If he had so willed it, all things would instantly have been; but thus it pleased him to take this proportion of time.

5. 'For the estate wherein God made all things at first,' God at first made all things *very good;* Gen. i. 4, 10. The Holy Ghost expressly noteth, 'That at the end of every day, God took a view of the particular works which he had made, and found them to be good.' This is noted to justify God, against all the evil that is in the world. Many creatures are now evil, but as God made them they were not so. All evil hath risen from the sin of man.

Applic. This doctrine of the creation is many ways useful.

I. 'To confute the atheists of our times, who are unwilling to acknowledge the true God, notwithstanding the whole frame of heaven and earth, and all things therein, do clearly demonstrate him.' For, who but God could make such a glorious stately fabric, as the world is, and that by his mere word of command, without any pre-existent matter? Certainly, there is so much of the power, wisdom and goodness of God engraven without on the creatures, and so much reason imprinted on the souls of men within, that no man (whose understanding is not judicially dar-

kened) could seriously and soberly consider the visible world, but he would be constrained to acknowledge an invisible God.

II. To instruct us in sundry duties.

1. 'Frequently to let forth our hearts in a serious meditation of the great works of God,' Psalm cxi. 4. 'He hath made his wonderful works to be remembered,' saith David. And indeed, the works of creation are so exceeding wonderful and glorious, that they are worthy our most serious remembrance and meditation.

2. 'To raise up our hearts in admiration of this great work of creation.' And truly, should we take a survey of the world, and observe what a rare symmetry, exact proportion and beauty there is in the whole, what a dependent subordination in the several parts; we could not but admiringly cry out with David, 'How marvellous are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all.'

3. 'To draw forth our hearts in thankfulness unto God.' It is not enough to meditate on the works of God with admiration, but we must likewise give him the glory of them, by praising his wisdom, power and goodness, manifested in them.

9. *Q.* Wherein consisteth the providence of God?

A. The providence of God consisteth, as in preserving the creature which he made, so in his wise and powerful ordering of them.

Expl. For the clearing this answer, I shall shew you.

1. 'That there is a providence.'

2. 'The acts of providence,' which are especially two.

1. 'God's preserving all things he hath made.'

2. 'His ordering and governing them.'

3. 'The properties of God's providence.'

I. For the first, 'That there is a providence.' Multitude of passages in the world do clearly evidence the same; as, that wild beasts should not be so fruitful as the tame, lest the world should be over-run with them. That there being far more wicked men in the world, yea, in every city, than good; yet, that the wicked should not fall upon the good, and root them out of the land of the living. And that the wild beasts, whose nature is to prey, should lie in their dens all the day long, when men go abroad to their work; and in the night time only should go abroad to seek their prey, when men lie down to rest, as the Psalmist expresseth, Psalm civ. 20, 21. These things, and many the like; as also, the universal care of all creatures, and of his church in special, do plainly argue a divine providence.

II. 'The acts of providence,' are especially two:

1. His preserving all things. 2. His governing all things.

First, If God did not sustain his creatures, they would soon come to nought. As God made all things by the word of his command, so he upholds them all in being by the word of his power. God preserves his creatures.

1. 'By continuing some of those particulars which he made at

first,' as the angels, the highest heavens, the sun, moon, stars, and the foundation of the earth.

2. 'By causing a propagation of their kind.' Thus though all those particular living creatures that were in ancient times are gone, yet, by the aforesaid propagation, whereby one cometh from another, the kinds of all of them still remain, and these are effects of divine providence.

Secondly, God's providence appeareth in his governing, ordering, and disposing of all things: and this he doth,

1. 'By implanting a law in the nature of all creatures,' according to which they are inclined to act.

2. 'By his ruling and ordering them in all their motions and actions, to those ends which he will have brought about.' There is a ruling hand of God in all things that come to pass, whether they be great or small; yea, in those things which to us seem casual, more especially he rules in all the actions of men, the chief of his creatures here, and in all the events that come upon them.

'He rules in all the councils of men.' He sits as president in all their councils, though they see him not. There cannot a decree pass in any council, unless the Lord give his vote for it.

'He rules in the actions of men:' In their good actions, in their evil actions, in their wise, in their foolish actions. Things that are done through our improvidence, yet are they not done without God's providence.

'He rules in the disposing of all men to their several stations and conditions in the world.' He rules in all the changes in the world, that are made both upon particular persons and upon societies. He raises up, and he pulls down; he makes rich, and he makes poor; he creates peace, and he makes war.

'He rules in all the accidents and casualties in the world:' health, sickness, prosperity, affliction, wounds, and healings; every arrow that flieth, every stone that falls, are all ordered by him. To God there are no casualties. That arrow that was shot at an adventure, and smote the king of Israel, was a casualty to him, but none in respect of God, his hand directed the arrow.

II. The properties of God's providence, are especially two.

1. *Wise.* 2. *Powerful.*

1. 'The works of God are all wrought in wisdom.' Isa. xxviii. 29. The wisdom of God is seen,

First, 'In bringing every thing to pass in its season.' Every thing is beautiful in its season, Eccles. iii. 11.

Secondly, 'In ordering all crosses and contrary, all clashing actions and events, so as they shall all concur to the bringing about his ends.' Two admirable instances whereof we have in those strange methods of providence: in the carrying Joseph into Egypt, and what befel him after he came there, and in the delivering Israel out of Egypt.

'The providence of God is powerful;' there is no resisting of it; Isa. lxiii. 13. 'I will work, and who shall let it?' God doth both out-wit the wisest, and out-work the strongest.

Applic. 1. 'Observe the providence of God,' Psalm cvii. 43. 'Whoso is wise will observe these things, and he shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord.' By observing the passages of God's providence, I do not mean a mere beholding them, but, an applying of our minds unto them, a serious viewing of them. And let us see the hand of God in all that comes to pass; say we of all that befals us, or any others, 'This is the Lord's doing.'

2. 'Often reflect upon them, calling them to remembrance; especially when you are in any danger;' which will be a special means to strengthen your faith in God in the greatest trials. By this, David encouraged himself to encounter Goliah, 1 Sam. xvii. 37. 'The Lord that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine.'

3. 'Abuse not providence.'

First, 'By making it our rule, or warrant for our actions.' It is good to follow providence, but not without a word; the word of God, and not his works, is to be our rule. Providence giveth opportunity for actions, but the word only will warrant them.

Nor *Secondly*, 'By blaming providence with the fruits of our improvidence; laying the fault on providence which is due to our own folly or lust.'

4. 'Submit to providence;' lift not up yourselves against God, nor quarrel at his will or doing. Whatever the Lord doth in earth, be silent; and say not unto him in discontent, What dost thou? or, Why is it thus? Say rather, 'It is the Lord, let him do what seems him good. Here I am, let the Lord do with me as he pleaseth.' Quietness under God's hand, will make our burdens lie the easier upon our shoulders, whereas flinging and fretting will make them gall the deeper.

5. 'Commit yourselves to providence.' Keep God's way and use God's means, and then leave the issues to him. We are in dangers and distresses, we are in fears, and our hearts cry out, 'What shall we do? How shall we escape this danger, or break through this difficulty?' Do your duty, and then leave yourselves to Providence. Keep his way, and then commit yourselves to him.

6. 'Wait for the issues of providence.' Let not the present darkness of the day discourage thee, but be confident, that if thou wait on the Lord, 'In the evening there shall be light.' Thou seest at present all things running against thee, all thy comforts running from thee, the evils that thou fearedst coming upon thee, and all visible ways of help and deliverance blocked up; and thou art ready to say, That such a complication of dark and dismal providences, can be no other than destructive. Yet, wait till the Lord

hath finished his work, and then thou shalt see that all those things which thou fearedst were but bringing on thy ruin, were made to serve to thy deliverance.

Having spoken of God according to his *nature, persons, properties*, and *works;*

We come now to speak of Man, according to his fourfold estate.

1. That happy estate wherein man was made at first.
2. That miserable estate whereinto he fell by sin.
3. The state of redemption by Jesus Christ.
4. That glorious estate which is in heaven reserved for him.

10. *Q.* In what estate was man made by God at first?

A. Man was made by God, in a very good and happy estate, even after the image of God, which consisteth in perfect knowledge, true holiness and righteousness.

Expl. 'The image of God, after which man was made, consisted, in knowledge, holiness and righteousness. Herein especially was man like unto God.

1. *In his knowledge.* God is an intelligent Being, and he hath given to man an understanding to know him, and all things that were his duty to know.

2. *In holiness and righteousness.* God is an holy and righteous God, and man was made in an holy and righteous estate, exactly and perfectly conformable (according to his capacity) to his holy Maker. Sin came in afterwards by the devil, whose image it is; but, as man came out of the hands of God, he was a pure and perfect creature, and wholly inclinable to good; the bent and disposition of his will (as God made him) was only to good: he had in his soul no inclination to evil. We read therefore that he was drawn away by an external temptation; Gen. iii. 1.

There are other excellencies in which man was at first like to God, whereof by sin he was deprived; as,

1. *Dominion over the creatures*, Gen. i. 28. For God is an high supreme Lord, who hath dominion over all. To be a lord therefore, and to have dominion, is to be like to God, to bear his image.

2. *Immortality.* God by a kind of property, is styled the *immortal God*, 1 Tim. i. 17. To be therefore immortal, is to be like to God, after his image, as Adam was before his fall; for death came by sin, Rom. v. 12.

3. *Majesty.* Which is one of God's high prerogatives, *Thine is Majesty*, saith David to God; 1 Chron. xxix. 11. Now, whereas of Adam and Eve, in their innocent estate, it is said, 'They were both naked, and were not ashamed,' Gen. ii. 25. meaning thereby, that their very bodies were created in such a comeliness, grace, glory and majesty, as all creatures admired and reverenced them, so as they had no cause to be ashamed of their nakedness, which shewed forth such glory and majesty.

But the most principal thing wherein man was made after God's

image, are those which are first mentioned, *Knowledge*, *holiness*, and *righteousness*.

Appl. 'Is God our maker? then his we are, and bound to devote ourselves wholly to his service.' We are not made to serve the *devil*, or *our flesh*, or *this world*. These did not make us, nor did God make us for their service. He made us for himself, and him alone let us serve, in holiness and righteousness all the days of our life.

2. 'Did God make us in his own image? then let us not defile nor deface his holy image in us.' Every sin is a blot, or a blur upon us, and a dishonour to God, whose image we are.

A sin-deformed soul, makes an ugly and odious representation of God to the world, who are apt to judge of God by his images.

11. *Q.* What positive particular law did God give to Adam, in his innocent estate?

A. God having made man, he entered into a covenant with him, promising eternal life upon his obedience, and threatened death upon his disobedience.

Expl. For the opening of this, let it be considered.

1. That God made man in a perfect estate, but not in an unchangeable estate. He was made perfectly holy, and had a power to have continued in that holy estate; but was not so confirmed in it, but that he might fall from it.

2. God bound man to continue in that holy and happy estate, by entering into covenant with him, and bring him into an holy covenant with himself.

3. This covenant was a covenant of life; that is, God promised upon his keeping this covenant, to give him eternal life. The threatening of death upon his disobedience, doth argue a promise of life upon his obedience.

4. This covenant was a covenant of works; that is, Obedience to the law of God, was the condition, upon the performance whereof he should live.

5. Besides the *moral law* or the *law of nature*, which was written in man's heart, all which he was bound to obey; God gave him a *positive law*, 'forbidding him to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil;' Gen. ii. 16, 17.

6. The penalty of breaking this law was death: 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.'

Obj. Whereas death was threatened unto Adam, upon the eating of that tree, some may question how God's threatening was made good, seeing Adam died not immediately upon his transgression, but lived many hundred years after.

Ans. Mortality instantly seized on him, his body became mortal so soon as he sinned, so as he was in the clutches of death. Death had the power over him. As a man that is arrested and apprehended by serjeants, to carry him to prison, is truly said

to be a prisoner: so, man apprehended by mortality, which is death's chief serjeant, to carry men to Death's prison may truly be said to die.

Appl. 'Let us with all thankfulness admire and adore the wonderful condescension of the great God, in dealing with his poor creatures in the way of covenanting;' that he should stoop so low as to accept man, who was but dust and ashes, in covenant with himself, the great Creator of heaven and earth; promising him eternal life and happiness upon obedience to his command. The Lord might have dealt with man by way of dominion and sovereignty, as a Creator with his creature, commanding what duty he pleased from him, being no way bound to the creature, but absolutely free; yet, of his mercy, grace and love to man, he condescends to this way of dealing with him, promising him to reward that obedience most bountifully which was due unto him, and which he might have expected without obligation on his part.

Having thus spoken of the happy estate wherein our first parents were created by God, I come to shew you that miserable estate whereinto they fell by sin.

12. Q. Did our first parents continue in their first and happy estate?

A. Surely no, they fell from it.

Expl. Here are two things to be explained.

1. 'The fall of our first parents.'

2. 'From what they fell:' and,

1. 'Concerning the fall of our first parents.' They were at first made by God in a blessed estate, and made able to abide therein, yet, under a possibility of falling; but by yielding to the temptation of Satan, they soon fell from that estate wherein they were created. 'The serpent guided by the devil,' first spake to the woman, as the weaker vessel, and most liable to seduction, and 'beguiled her with his subtilty,' under a specious promise of universal knowledge of *good* and *evil*. She being beguiled, tempted her husband, and brought him into sin; for he, out of willingness to gratify his wife, whom he had newly embraced with most dear affection, did eat of the forbidden fruit. So much is implied from God's own words; Gen. iii. 17. 'Because thou hast hearkened to the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree,' &c. Surely this was the saddest act that ever was; it was the undoing of man, and (without the mercy of God) the damning of all souls.

II. For the second particular, 'From what our first parents fell.' It was from that blessed and happy estate wherein they were created. For, whereas they were created after the image of God, in true knowledge, holiness and righteousness: by their fall, the image of God was defaced in them, and they became corrupted and polluted in all the faculties of their souls.

Appl. 'From the fall of our first parents, upon the temptation

of Satan, let us learn not to be too bold and confident in our own strength.' Have such tall cedars fallen? How then shall such poor, weak shrubs, as we are, think to stand firm and immoveable? Adam, though he was endowed with a great measure of knowledge; yea, with power to abide in his estate of innocency, having no inclination to evil, but was wholly inclinable unto good; yet, was no sooner tempted, but presently yields thereunto, and is overcome, to the ruin of himself and all his posterity. What danger is there then of our falling in the day of temptation? when Satan is as malicious against mankind as ever, and is now by experience grown much more cunning to deceive.

For the better preventing the temptations of Satan, and preserving thyself from being overcome by them, observe these directions,

1. 'Labour to be thoroughly sensible of thine own weakness and impotency to withstand his temptations.' The truth is, The best of us are weak, and of no strength; yea, confidence in our own strength is the fore-runner of a fall; as you may see in Peter, who, when he was most confident of his own strength, then he was nearest to a fall.

2. 'Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.' This direction to keep us safe from Satan's assaults, is given us by the apostle, Eph. vi. 10.

3. 'Let it be thy daily prayer unto God, that thou mayest not enter into temptation; and when thou art entered thereinto, that he would not suffer thee to be overcome by it. It is only the power of God that doth keep us from the temptations of Satan, and prayer is the means sanctified by God for the obtaining of it.

4. 'Exercise and actuate thy faith in Jesus Christ,' believing he is both able and willing to strengthen thee under all thy trials and temptations, and deliver thee out of the same in the most seasonable time, when it shall make most for his glory, and thy comfort. Oh! therefore, all ye who complain of the temptations of Satan, go unto Christ for help and strength; whose arms are ever open to receive all poor tempted souls, and whose heart is likewise open and willing to yield unto you all needful succour, and seasonable deliverance; and cast yourselves on him for power, whereby you will engage his strength for you.

5. 'Take heed thou dost not give entertainment to the suggestions of Satan, do not revolve them in thy mind, by meditating on them.' For, if so, thou art in danger to be insnared by them: therefore speedily reject them with indignation. It was *Eve's* hearkening unto Satan's suggestions that was the cause of her fall.

6. 'If thou hast given too hearty welcome unto the temptations of Satan, so that they have gained a kind of consent, yet put forth thy utmost endeavours to restrain the external sinful action.' Though the devil hath kindled a fire in thy bosom, yet let not the sparks fly abroad; dam up the furnace and the fire will go out.

13. *Q.* What was the particular sin of our first parents in *Paradise?*

A. The particular sin of our first parents in *Paradise*, was disobedience against God, in eating the forbidden fruit.

Expl. The chief thing here to be considered, is the particular sin for which our first parents were deprived of their happiness: which was 'disobedience against God in eating the forbidden fruit.' Rom. v. 19. 'By one man's disobedience many were made sinners.' Tho' the matter of the offence seem small, yet the disobedience of our first parents was infinitely great, they having sinned against an infinite God, rebelliously breaking his command, ingratefully rendering evil to him for all the multitude of blessings bestowed on them.

For the clearer manifestation of the heinousness of this sin of our first parents, I shall briefly shew you,

1. 'The circumstances which do aggravate it.'

2. 'What sins especially were infolded in it.'

There are two circumstances which do aggravate the sin of our first parents.

1. 'It was no hard matter to forbear.' It is easier to forbear a thing forbidden, than to do a thing commanded. Now, this was not the doing of any thing, but a mere forbearance, 'Thou shalt not eat of the fruit of that tree in the midst of the garden.'

2. 'They had no need to eat of that fruit;' for they had variety enough, not only for nourishment to content, but also for pleasure to delight. The sins infolded in that transgression are these,

1. 'Infidelity, in that they believed not God's express charge.' For, whereas God hath said, 'In the day that thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die;' Gen. ii. 17. They believed not that they should die, but made question and doubt of it, as appeareth by the woman's mincing of that threatening thus, *Lest ye die*, Gen. iii. 3. God said, *Surely ye shall die;* she, *Lest ye die.*

2. 'Sottish credulity, in giving too much credit to Satan:' God hath said, 'Thou shalt surely die;' and the devil said, 'Ye shall not die:' yet, the woman, and so also the man, gave more credit to the devil, the father of lies, than to God, the father of truth.

3. 'Vain curiosity, affecting to know that which was no way needful to be known.' For, when the Serpent had said, 'Ye shall know good and evil,' she was thereby moved to hazard eternal life for knowledge of evil, for all good they knew before.

4. 'Ambition, desiring to be as gods.' For this also was a motive whereby the woman was enticed and beguiled; the devil said, 'Ye shall be as gods;' Gen. iii. 5. and she was so tickled and puffed up therewith, that she transgressed.

5. *Sensuality*, which is an inordinate desire to satisfy the external senses and appetite. This is thus expressly noted, Gen. iii. 6. 'The woman saw that the tree was good for food,' (that is, plea-

sant to the taste) 'and that it was pleasant to the eye,' (that is, goodly and fair to look on) 'she took of the fruit thereof and did eat.'

6. *Murder*, They brought thereby death, not only upon themselves, but likewise upon all their posterity. Yea, and as much as in them lay, they implunged themselves, and all their posterity, into eternal death and destruction.

Appl. 1. 'This sin of our first parents affordeth matter of humiliation, in regard of that eternal shame and loss, that lieth on our nature by that foul offence.' Whose heart would not be affected with grief and sorrow, did he rightly understand the heinousness of it?

2. 'The transcendent greatness of Adam's sin, should raise up our hearts in admiration of the transcendent greatness of the goodness and wisdom of God, who hath made the greatest evil an occasion of the greatest good unto his church.' Bernard's heart was so lifted up in admiration of it, that he cried out; 'Happy transgression, which occasioned such a Redeemer.' And it becometh us, as to bewail that sin of Adam, which is ours by imputation, so to bless God for the means of pardon and recovering, and withal to adore the wonderful wisdom and goodness of God, in finding out such a way and means of recovery, as the cursed death of his dearly beloved Son Jesus Christ, for the satisfying his justice, pacifying his wrath, and procuring his favour towards us.

14. *Q.* Are all the posterity of Adam guilty of his sin?

A. All the posterity of Adam, coming from him by natural generation, being taken into covenant with him, are guilty of his sin.

Expl. Two things are here considerable.

1. 'That the covenant of works was made with Adam, not only for himself, but for all his posterity.' God took them all into covenant with Adam, who was the common root of them all. Although Adam was the person to whom the command was given, and with whom the covenant was made; yet, was it not only personal to himself, but to Adam, as a public person, who was the representative of the whole race of mankind.

2. 'That all mankind descending from him by ordinary generation, sinned with him, and fell with him in his first transgression.' Adam then was a public person, who did bear in his loins all his posterity. And, besides, he was appointed of God at that time, to stand in the room of all mankind, that should be to the end of the world.

So that we are all one in Adam, and with him, both *legally* and *naturally*.

First, Legally, Being parties in the covenant which God made with him in *Paradise*.

Secondly, Naturally, As descending from him by ordinary generation, and therefore guilty of his first sin.

Appl. 'Oh that Adam's example might be our caution.' As he brought death and sin upon all his posterity: so, Oh that parents would use their utmost endeavour to convey spiritual life and holiness to their children; I mean, not as *natural*, but as *moral* instruments. Parents, I know, expect their children should be obedient unto them; now, there is no better way to make them so, than to train them up in true piety. Where this is wanting, it is no marvel that so many children prove crosses and vexation to their parents. Yea, let parents know, that if their children live and die in their sins through their neglect, their blood will be required at their hands.

For the better training up children in piety, let parents observe these few directions.

1. 'So soon as children begin to read, cause them to read the holy scriptures;' which being the word of God, hath a greater virtue in it to work piety, than all human writings whatsoever: so as, through God's blessing, the work of grace may be wrought in children, by reading the holy scriptures, 'For the law of God is perfect, converting the soul,' Psalm xix. 7.

2. 'Hear and teach them some good and sound catechism, whereby they may understand the first principles of religion;' and, according to your ability, instruct them therein; whereby they will be better fitted to hear sermons fruitfully. This work at first ought especially to be performed by the mother, who is ordinarily at home, and hath her children about her, when the father is abroad, and thereby hath greater advantage, and more opportunity of instilling good things into them. Let this work of catechising be often performed, but by little at once, that it may not prove tedious.

3. 'Carry them with you to the public ordinances,' and at home enquire of them what they remember of that they heard: do your endeavour to make it plain unto them, and to apply it home to their consciences. This course of calling them to account of what they have heard, will cause them to give better attention unto the ministry of the word.

4. 'Teach them to pray,' both by instructing them in the nature of that duty, and providing them some short and pithy form of prayer, which they may use till they need no longer such an help; and calling them often to an account whether they do it or no.

5. 'Be patterns of piety unto your children.' Let it appear by your daily conversation, that yourselves are such as you desire them to be; namely, 'persons truly fearing God.' It is a true saying, 'That examples prevail more than precepts;' and we know it is the disposition of children to imitate their parents. The consideration whereof should be a strong persuasion to pa-

rents, to be more watchful over themselves, lest their ungodly lives prove an occasion of their children's profaneness.

6. 'Carefully observe the first out-breakings of corruption in your children, and timely curb their first exorbitances.' So soon as you hear them take the name of God in vain, or to lie, or swear, or curse, be sure to reprove and correct them for the same. Prov. xiii. 24. 'He that spareth his rod, hateth his son; he that loveth him, chasteneth him betimes.'

7. 'Take care that they keep holy the Sabbath-day:' Suffer them not to spend any part of it either in idleness or carnal recreations, but call upon them to spend some time in secret prayer, in reading the scriptures, and other good books, when they are come from the public ordinances. In the fourth commandment, parents are expressly enjoined to see that their children, as well as themselves, keep holy the Sabbath-day.

8. 'Acquaint them with good company, and forbid them evil company;' especially such as are scoffers at godliness. For, such will prove great quench-coals to true zeal and piety. Yea, by familiarity with them, your children are like to become as bad as they. 'As he who walks with wise men shall be wise,' Prov. xiii. 20. so, he who walks with wicked men, shall be wicked. Woful experience tells us, how many young men that were hopeful, by associating themselves with lewd company, have proved very profane.

9. 'When your children are of capacity to understand the mysteries of the gospel, then apply yourselves more particularly unto them, in reference to their conversion.' To this end,

First, 'Make known unto them their lost condition by nature.' How they are in a cursed, damned state, by reason of their manifold sins; liable to all sorts of judgments, *temporal*, *spiritual* and *eternal;* and that, if they should die in their natural estate, their portion will be hell and damnation to all eternity.

Secondly, 'Shew them the necessity of regeneration to salvation.' Press on them that speech of our Saviour to Nicodemus, John iii. 3. 'Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.' Here you see that it is impossible for any man or woman to be saved, so long as they remain in their natural estate, not being renewed by the Spirit of God; that is, Except they be altered and changed both inwardly and outwardly, from what they were, and become new creatures; having their understandings enlightened, their affections sanctified, and their lives reformed.

Thirdly, 'Instruct them in the only true ground of salvation, which is Christ and his righteousness, with the merits of his death and passion.' Acquaint them, that as he is the wise builder, who builds his house upon a rock; so, he is the wise Christian who builds his hope of salvation upon that rock, the Lord Jesus Christ.

The more to encourage them to build their hopes on Christ alone.

1. 'Set forth unto them what an all-sufficient Saviour Christ is:' How being God as well as man, his death was an all-sufficient sacrifice, a full satisfaction to God's justice for all our sins, even the greatest and grossest. In which respect, the beloved disciple John saith, *The blood of Christ cleanseth from all sin*, 1 John i. 7. and, saith the prophet David, Psalm cxxx. 7. 'Let Israel hope in the Lord, for with the Lord there is mercy, and with him plenteous redemption:' As if he had said, The redemption purchased by Christ, the price which he paid was enough, and enough for all their sins, how many and heinous soever they are.

2. 'Declare unto them what a willing Saviour Christ is:' How he is as infinitely able, so infinitely willing, to save poor sinners; which clearly appeareth, as by his willingness to offer up his life a sacrifice for their sins, so, by his manifold gracious invitations of all poor sinners, who are but sensible of their sins, and groan under the burden of them, to come unto him, and cast themselves with the burden of their sins on him, with a promise of peace and comfort; as Mat. xi. 28. Isa. lv. 1. and John vii. 37.

Fourthly, 'Labour to convince them, that there is no way or means of salvation, but only by believing in Jesus Christ;' by going out of themselves unto him, renouncing all righteousness of their own, as filthy rags, and placing their whole confidence on Christ's perfect righteousness and meritorious death, and then to resign themselves up unto Christ, to be his faithful servants.

Fifthly, 'Be frequent and fervent with God in prayer on their behalf.' Beg of God, 'That thy children, may be his children, and whatsoever he deny them, he would not deny his saving sanctifying graces.' Prayer is the means God hath sanctified for obtaining every good gift, both for ourselves and others. And truly, without it, little success can be expected from other means. 'Though Paul may plant, and Apollos water, yet, it is God that giveth the increase.' We find in Acts vi. 4, 7. that when the apostles gave themselves to prayer, and the ministry of the word, multitudes were converted to the faith. Oh that parents would be more careful in this duty! A stock of prayers laid up for your children in heaven, would do them much more good, than a stock of money on earth.

Having treated of the sin of our first parents, come we now to treat of sin in general; and then of the several kinds of it.

15. *Q.* What is sin?

A. Sin is a transgression of God's law.

Expl. This doth an apostle expressly define it; 1 John iii. 4. The law is a manifestation of the will of God, declaring what he would have man to do, or not to do; therefore, to transgress the law, is to offend God, and to sin against his express will.

16. *Q.* What are the kinds of sin?

A. The kinds of sin are; original, and actual.

17. *Q.* What is original sin?

A. Original sin is that corruption of nature, wherein all are conceived and born.

This kind of sin did he mean, who said, 'I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me;' Psalm li. 5. The image of God, in which Adam was created, being by his fall defaced, he became corrupted in every faculty of his soul, and part of his body; and then begat a son in his own likeness; that is, corrupted and infected with sin; like father, like son. Hence we are said to bring with us into the world a corrupted and depraved nature. As every other creature brings into the world the disposition of their kind and stock; as lions, a ravenous disposition: wolves and dogs, a wolvish doggish disposition: so, children of sinful men, a sinful disposition.

This original corruption is not only a sin, but a heinous sin; which appeareth,

1. 'In that it is the seed of all sins.' All manner of actual sins arise out of this.

2. 'It is an universal corruption:' It defileth a man throughout; that is, in every power of soul and part of body; so as by reason of the tincture of it, there is no soundness or purity in any part of man.

3. 'It is restless,' continually soliciting a man to actual sins: witness the complaint of the apostle; 'I see a law in my members, warring against the law of my mind,' Rom. vii. 23. He could not be quiet by reason of this sin in him, and the perpetual solicitation of it to rebellion. It is in a man as a springing fountain, which continually springeth up, and sending forth waters like itself. Yea, as the raging sea foams and casts up mire and dirt: and, as a filthy dunghill, doth continually reek forth and evaporate noisome steams; so, do our hearts continually send forth unsavoury lusts and motions.

4. 'It is an abiding corruption:' It continues with the wicked and impenitent for ever and ever. All the fire in hell cannot consume, nor burn it out of them. Neither doth grace purge it fully out of the godly in this life. They who are renewed by the Spirit of God, are not perfectly freed from it. Though the strength of it be much weakened, yet, doth it remain in the very best of men, who have experience of the power and efficacy of it; as in all places, so, in all duties, even their most religious exercises.

Appl. 'Let us embrace this doctrine of original corruption, as a certain truth, and deeply be humbled in the consideration of it.' Some deny it, and the greatest part of people are insensible of it; but the godly they acknowledge it, and sadly bewail it. David, in Psalm li. 5. crieth out in the bitterness of his soul. 'Behold I

was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me.' Whereby he acknowledgeth, that he came into the world corrupted and polluted, and brought with him a fountain of sin and corruption; from whence those foul streams of adultery and murder did flow. In Rom. vii. 24. we find the great Apostle crying out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death;' that is, From the body of sin and corruption, which he carried about him. Every one that is born of man, is carnal and corrupt, prone unto all evil, and backward to every thing that is good.

This being the condition of mankind, then surely it will be our wisdom often to reflect upon our original corruption, which will be a special means to humble us, and to keep us low in our own sense and apprehension.

I shall clear up this point of original corruption, with laying down some considerations for the comfort of many Christians, who, though they are renewed by the Spirit of God; yet, go mourning under a sense of the working and stirring of corruption in them.

1. *Consid.* 'That sight and sense of corruption is an hopeful sign of the truth of grace.' Motes and dust are in a room before the sun shine thereinto, but they appear not. So, corruption was in thine heart before, in thy unregenerate state, then were there swarms of worldly, wanton thoughts in thine heart, but thou perceivedst them not: that thou now discernest them, it is because Christ the Sun of righteousness hath risen upon thy soul, shining there by the beams of his light, which discovers unto thee the most inward and secret corruption, should be so far from causing thee to question the truth of grace in thee, and thine interest in Christ, that it should rather confirm thy belief therein.

2. *Consid.* 'Upon the work of grace in any soul, corruption will be sure to work and stir, even more than formerly.' In Mat. ii. 3. we read that when Christ was born, all Jerusalem was troubled. So, when Christ is born in a soul, corruption will be troublesome, and be sure to stir and rebel. Grace and corruption being contrary one to another, they will lust one against another. Corruption may, and doth rule and reign in some men's hearts, without any resistance of grace. But grace doth never rule in any man's heart here, without the resistance and opposition of corruption.

3. *Consid.* 'That the Lord doth not exact of us, that we should be perfectly free from the working and stirring of corruption in us; but that we should endeavour to mortify our corruption more and more, according to the measure of grace and strength which we have received.' He doth not expect that we be without sin, but that corruption do not rule and reign in our mortal bodies; that we should like slaves, obey it willingly in the lust of it; Ro. vi. 12.

4. *Consid.* 'Though corruption doth remain in God's children, after their closing with Jesus Christ by a true and lively faith, yet shall it not be imputed to them to their condemnation. This, the apostle expressly declareth, Rom. viii. 1. Having, in the foregoing chapter set forth the condition of a regenerate man, in regard of the remainders of corruption in him; how that 'he could not do the good he would, but did the evil which he would not; and that there was a law in his members warring against the law of his mind, and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin.' Lest any should hereby be discouraged upon the sight and sense of his corruption, he immediately adds in the beginning of the eighth chapter, that, notwithstanding the remainders of corruption, and the working and stirring of it, 'yet there was no condemnation to them which were in Christ Jesus.'

Though there be a fountain of sin in us, yet, in Jesus Christ there is a fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness, Zech. xiii. 'Whose blood cleanseth us from all sin.' Let us therefore by faith sprinkle our souls with the blood of Christ, by applying the merits of it unto ourselves for our comfort. Faith is the hand of the soul, and the soul by faith puts her hand into the wounds of Christ; and, having taken of his blood, besprinkles herself with it. As those houses of the Israelites, whose door posts were besprinkled with the blood of the *Paschal-Lamb*, were safe from the destroying angel; so, those souls which are sprinkled with the blood of Christ, are safe from the condemning power of their corruption.

18. *Q.* What is actual sin?

A. Actual sin is the fruit of original sin in evil thoughts, words, and deeds.

Expl. All actual sins may be reduced to three heads, viz.

1. *Evil thoughts.* 2. *Evil words.* 3. *Evil deeds.*

1. *Evil thoughts* or *imaginations.* Gen. vi. 5. 'Every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.' Oh what a world of wickedness is the heart of man! If there were no more in it than its evil thoughts, what swarms of them are there! Those swarms of flies, lice and locusts that were the plagues of Egypt, were but a small number to those armies of evil thoughts, that are in the hearts of men.

2. *Evil words.* These are also actual sins, as appeareth from Mat. xiii. 36. where Christ saith, 'At the day of judgment men shall give account for every idle word.' That, whereof an account is to be given at that day, is a sin; yea, a sin to be condemned. *Idle words* therefore are sins; and if *idle words*, then surely *idle words* are sins, yea, Actual sins, being actions of the tongue or mouth.

3. *Evil deeds*, or *outward actions:* Concerning these no question can be made, but they are actual sins. Being *deeds*, they are ac-

tual; being *evil*, they are sins. *Thoughts* and *lusts* are actions of the tongue, discerned only by God. Words are actions of the tongue, discerned by the ear; but outward actions are discerned by the eye, and apparent to God and man.

Appl. Learn hence, 'That our recovery out of our sinful state,

I. 'Must begin in our very hearts and natures.'

First, 'We must lie deep in our humiliation.' Our humbling and lothing of ourselves, should be chiefly, for that we are rotten at the core; that our hearts and our very natures are so corrupted and depraved. Some *foolish sinners* go about to excuse themselves from their hearts, saying, 'That though their lives be evil, yet they have a good heart toward God.' Whereas the heart of sinners is the worst part in them: It is a sign what a good heart thou hast, by the fruit that comes forth. Doth thy lying, and swearing, and drinking, and rioting, with which thy life abounds, come out of thy *good heart?* Is it an *holy root* that sends forth such *unclean fruit?* Surely no, thine heart is the worst part in thee.

Secondly, 'Begin your mortification here.' The body of sin must first be destroyed before its *members*. Lay the ax to the *root* of the *tree*, cast salt into the *fountain*, if you would have the waters healed. Your *heart-purging*, and *heart-mortifying*, must be your great *work*. Let your natures be changed, be renewed in the spirit of your minds, if ever you would be soundly recovered.

II. 'It must extend far, even through the whole life.' Our *recovery* out of our *sinful estate* must begin in our *hearts*, but it must not end there; our *evil branches* must be *lopped*, our *evil fruit* must be *shaken off*, as well as our *evil root healed*. There must be an universal *reformation* of the *life*, as well as an inward *renovation* of the *heart*. O sinners, purge your consciences first, and then also purge your conversations from dead works. Kill sin within, and fly from sin without. What have been thy sinful ways and practices? Hast thou been given to swearing or lying, or drunkenness, or what other evils are there that thou hast been accustomed to? Whatever they be, resolve, through the assistance of God's grace, to have no more to do with thy former sinful courses; and this will prove thee a recovered soul.

Go sinner, go before the Lord; confess thine evil nature, confess thine evil practices, and, as much as thou canst, the several particulars of them, with their aggravations; and give not over until thou feel shame to cover thy face, and sorrow to fill thine heart; and thenceforth set thyself to crucify thine evil nature, and to turn from all thine evil ways. So shalt thou be able to say, 'This my soul was dead, and is alive; was sick, and is sound.'

Having shewed the kinds of actual sins, come we now to shew the several ways of committing them.

10. *Q.* How many ways is sin committed?

A. Three ways: First, by committing, or doing that which the law forbids.

Secondly, By omitting, or not doing, what the law requires.

Thirdly, By not performing duties aright.

Expl. 1. 'Sin is committed, by doing that which the law forbids.' The law says, Swear not, lie not, Thou shalt not covet, &c. Now he that doth swear, lie, or do any thing which the law forbids, is a transgressor.

2. 'By omitting, or not doing, what the law requires.' If thou art not a liar, or swearer, &c. yet if thou livest in the neglect of prayer, or of the due sanctification of the sabbath, or instructing thy family, or of any other known duty; hereby also thou art a transgressor.

3. 'By not performing duties aright.' God hath regard, not only to the matter, but to the manner of our good duties. He that prays, and doth not pray fervently; he that hears, and doth not hear attentively; he that gives, and doth not give cheerfully; this is not the praying, or hearing, or giving that God requires, or will accept.

Appl. 1. 'How much more sin are we guilty of than most men imagine?' By the time you have cast up your multitudes of sins of commission, and have looked over your neglect of known duties, and added to them your manifold failings in the manner of *doing* those things which you have *done;* Oh to what a formidable *number* will they rise!

2. 'How great need have we of a Jesus to answer for us?' We could never satisfy for one sin, though we had no more; how then could we answer for such numerous multitudes, if we had not a Jesus to answer for us?

3. 'How great need have we of a continued daily repentance?' While there is sinning, there must be repenting, and our repentance should bear (as much as we are able) some proportion to our sins. Many sins call for many sighs and tears, and repeated sins for renewed repentance.

4. 'Whatever your care of duties be, let nothing short of uprightness satisfy you.' Weakness there will be, and we may not be discouraged at them. But how weak soever you be in your duties, be sure you be not hypocrites. What is done but weakly, if it be but honestly done in simplicity and godly sincerity, with a plain mind to serve and glorify God, according to what you are able: this will be accepted with God.

20. Q. 'Are all sins equally heinous and offensive in the sight of God?'

A. Surely no. But some sins in their own nature, and others, in regard of some aggravating circumstances, are greater than others.

Expl. The heinousness of some sins above others is,

1. 'In their own nature.' And thus sins against the first table are more heinous than sins against the second table; that is, taken in the same degree. And farther, sinful deeds are ordinarily worse than sinful words; and sinful words than sinful thoughts, &c.

2. 'In respect to their aggravations.' Thus *sins* against *knowledge* are greater than *sins of ignorance: wilful sins* are greater than *sins of infirmity; sins of professors* are greater than those that make no profession. *Sins of magistrates* and *ministers* are ordinarily more provoking than the *sins* of common people and the like.

Appl. 1. 'Let us therefore be watchful, as against every sin, so especially against gross sins.' The greater thy *sins*, the greater shall be thy *plagues*.

2. 'Yea, let us not allow ourselves in little sins.' The least *sin* unrepented of, may damn; Rom. vi. 23. 'Death is the wages of sin;' that is, of every *sin*, great or little; for the apostle directly affirmeth of *sin*, without any restraint or limitation thereof, *that it bringeth death*. So that, unless the smaller *sins* be no *sins*, the smallest must needs be deadly; considering that the smallest *sins* that art, come under this name SIN, the wages whereof is death.

21. *Q.* What is the punishment due to sin?

A. The punishment due to sin is, the wrath and curse of God, which causeth all the miseries of this life, at the end death, and eternal torment in hell.

Expl. In this answer is set forth the miserable estate of man by sin; which consisteth in five particulars.

I. 'All men by their sins are under the wrath of God;' liable to his wrathful displeasure, which is so dreadful a condition, as no created understanding can conceive how sad it is: Psal. xc. 11. *Who knoweth the power of thine anger?* As if he had said, who is able to express or think how terrible and dreadful the wrath of God is against those with whom he is justly incensed? Prov. xx. 2. saith the wise man, 'the wrath of a king is as the roaring of a lion.' What then is the wrath of God, the King of kings, whose wrath is a consuming fire?

How then may we wonder at the folly, or rather madness of those men, who wilfully adventure upon the committing of known *sins*, whereby they incense the fire of God's wrath, and cast themselves into the midst thereof!

II. 'All men by their sins are under the curse of God;' which attendeth them in every place. If they are in their houses, 'The curse of God is in the house of the wicked;' Prov. iii. 33. yea, and follows them into the fields and orchards; so that they are cursed in whatsoever they have and enjoy. The curse of God meets them in every providence, and followeth them in all their undertakings. What good success then can they expect in any business?

III. 'All men by their sins are liable to all the miseries of this life.' Even to all sorts of miseries; miseries appertaining to their bodies; as all manner of sicknesses and diseases, grief and pains, banishment and imprisonment, with the like. Miseries appertaining to their *souls*, as dreadful agonies, terrors of conscience, vexation of spirit, with the like. Miseries appertaining to their estate; as losses, by fire, thieves, and the like. Miseries appertaining to their *names*; as slanders, reproaches, backbiting, and the like. Innumerable are the miseries whereunto men in their natural estate are here subject; which are not to them fatherly chastisements for their good and amendment, but just punishments on them for their sins.

IV. 'All men by their sins are subject to death.' Only such are to be accepted, whom God extraordinarily took in their bodies, into heaven; as Enoch, Heb. xi. 5. and Elijah, 2 Kings ii. 11. and those which shall be living at the moment of Christ's coming to judgment; they have no time to die, but shall suddenly be wrapt up from earth, and in their bodies, as well as in their souls, be set before the judgment-seat of Christ. But certain it is, that all others must die; though for the *time* when, the *place* where, and the *manner* how, it is uncertain.

Perhaps, some on their death-beds, may begin to bewail their wicked lives, and wish they had less minded the world, and their wicked pleasures, and more minded the *concernment* of their *precious souls*: and that they had better improved the *means* and *opportunities* of *grace*, which were afforded unto them. But alas, they may find it is too late to cry out with Balaam, 'O that I might die the death of the righteous,' when they have neglected to live the life of the righteous. For, as men's lives are, so, commonly are their deaths; and as death leaves them, so shall judgment find them. And therefore, it will be our wisdom now to improve the *means* and *opportunities* of *grace*, now to abandon our lusts, and to resign up ourselves unto Christ; who alone can make death comfortable to us.

V. 'All men by their sins are subjects to eternal torments in hell.' Here is to be noted both the *extremity* and the *perpetuity* of *hell's torments*, whereunto the wicked are subject. *First*, 'The extremity of their misery,' in that they shall be tormented in hell. *Secondly*, 'The perpetuity of it;' their torments in hell will be *eternal*.

1. 'If thou livest and diest in thy *sins* unrepented of,' thou must look to partake of the second death, as well as of the first. I mean, to be *tortured* and *tormented in hell-fire*, prepared for the devil and his angels. What the *pains* of hell are, the *scriptures* setteth forth by *resemblances*, taken from things most terrible to sense, and most tormenting, as *fire* and *brimstone*, which are only to help our understanding in those things which pass our knowledge.

2. 'As the torments of hell are extreme, so are they eternal;' therefore set forth by *everlasting fire*, and by the *worm that never dieth;* Mark iii. 12. and in Rev. xiv. 11. it is said, 'That those who are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, shall be tormented day and night for ever and ever.' And their being so upheld, that they are never consumed, so that though they are most grievously tormented, yet, shall there be no end of their pain; which indeed maketh hell to be hell.

Appl. 1. 'This may inform us of the sad condition of every impenitent sinner.' Surely, if this were seriously considered, that thou art under the *wrath*, and *curse of God*, it would so startle thee, that thou wouldst not be able to eat, or sleep, or work, without fear and trembling, when, for aught thou knowest, the next hour might wrap up thy soul in everlasting flames. And yet here is thy misery, thou wilt scarcely spend a serious thought upon it from one day to another, but act as secure and senseless, as if thou were in no danger at all.

O sinner; Is this a state to be at rest and secure in? To be jolly and merry in? thou art merry, taking thine ease and pleasure: But, man, What is thy condition? What, under the wrath and curse of God? at the very mouth of hell? In hazard every hour of dropping down into the lake of fire? and yet so merry and secure?

2. 'How should the consideration of the dreadful desert of sin, ravish our souls with an admiration of the surpassing love of Christ; in bearing our sins in his body on the tree, and there offering up his life as an all-sufficient sacrifice and satisfaction to God's justice; to free us from that wrath and curse of God, which neither we, nor the angels in heaven, were able to bear! What can more endear our hearts to Christ than this?

22. *Q.* Is there any means to free sinful men out of their miserable estate?

A. Yea, God hath given unto man a Saviour.

Expl. Man being unable to help himself out of his miserable estate; God the Father, out of his infinite wisdom and goodness, found out a way and mean of man's recovery; John iii. 16. 'God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish, but have everlasting life.' True it is, all and every of the persons have several works in the effecting of man's salvation. The Father, was the fountain and contriver of it: the Son, was the mean of purchasing it; he descended from heaven, took our nature upon him, and therein offered up his own life, as an all-sufficient sacrifice, and full satisfaction to God's justice for man's sins. The Holy Ghost, applieth and sealeth unto our hearts the benefit of our redemption, whereby we come to be effectually partakers of it. Thus do they all concur to the effecting this great work.

But the plot and project of it was laid by God the Father; of which there can be no cause assigned, but his free love, pity and compassion.

That our hearts may be the more raised up to an admiration, of the singular love of God unto lost man herein; let us consider,

1. 'What kind of Son God gave for our redemption:' not an adopted son, but his own natural Son; not one son of many, but his only begotten Son. Not such a son as Esau was to his father, even a grief of heart unto him; but his dearly beloved Son, who never displeased him, but was daily his delight, Prov. viii. 3.

2. 'For whom God sent his dearly beloved Son into the world:' Surely not for angels, nor for man in his innocent estate: but God commendeth his love in giving his Son to us, and for us, when we were sinners, yea, enemies to him, whom he might justly have destroyed.

II. 'O let the love of God have its proper fruit and efficacy upon our hearts, in returns of love to him again;' let us make it our design, how to live to his honour and glory, who made it his design how to glorify us, who had plunged ourselves into a state of damnation.

III. 'Hath God of his free grace and rich mercy provided such a Saviour for poor lost sinners?' let us then accept of him; give him hearty welcome into our souls.

Two things are requisite to make Christ ours; *God's giving*, and *our taking*. The former is done, God hath given Christ to us: It is the latter that lieth on us, *to take Christ*, whom God hath given. Dost thou accept of Christ? Art thou willing to venture thy soul upon him? To deny thyself, thine own lusts, and thine own righteousness, to be one of his disciples and followers in holiness? If this be the unfeigned purpose of thine heart, then Christ is thy Saviour and Redeemer, and thou art one of his redeemed ones.

23. *Q.* Who is man's Saviour?

A. Man's Saviour is the Lord Jesus Christ, who was both God and man in one person.

Expl. In this answer, the author of man's redemption is set forth;

1. By his *titles*, which are two; 1. *Saviour.* 2. *Lord.*

2. By his *names*, which are two; 1. *Jesus.* 2. *Christ.*

3. By his *nature*, which are two; the *divine* and *human*, for he was both God and man.

4. By the 'union of his two natures in one person,' being God and man in one person.

1. 'Christ is here styled *Saviour*.' When man by his fall had deeply plunged himself into a state of sin and misery, and was helpless and hopeless, in respect of any means of his own for his recovery, it pleased the Lord out of his free grace and rich mer-

cy, to provide him a Saviour, in and by whom salvation is to be had, and in no other; Acts iv. 12. 'Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given amongst men, whereby we must be saved.'

The second title given unto Christ, is *Lord;* which in the holy scripture is frequently given him; and that in a twofold respect.

1. 'By right of creation,' having given a being to all creatures; the Creator of all must needs be Lord of all.

2. 'By right of redemption:' He who redeemeth any out of bondage, is in that respect their Lord; Christ therefore having saved and redeemed us from all our enemies, is in that respect *our Lord.*

II. For his *names.* The first is *Jesus:* this name was given by an angel from God, Mat. i. 21. It is an *Hebrew* word, and signifieth *Saviour.* The *angel* that gave the name *Jesus*, giveth this reason of it, 'He shall save his people from their sins;' Mat. i. 21. His other name is *Christ*, which was also attributed to him by an angel; Luke ii. 11. It is a *Greek* word, and signifieth *anointed.* Now, because the whole world was distinguished by these two names, Jews, (who were of the Christ) and Greeks, (who were of the church) Acts xiv. 1. to shew, that Jesus Christ was to be the Saviour both of Jews and Greeks, even of all sorts of people; these two names, *Jesus*, *Christ*, being of different languages, are given unto him. *Jesus*, shews him to be a Saviour; *Christ*, an able Saviour, because *anointed;* that is, set apart, gifted, and enabled to the work and office of mediatorship.

III. 'His natures are two.' First, His *divine nature*, implied under this word, *God.* Christ ever was, and is the eternal Son of God, being very God of very God, of the same divine essence and substance that the Father is. The reasons why it was requisite that our Redeemer should be God, are these:

1. 'That he might be able to endure that which for man's sins he was to undergo.' Such was the wrath of God against sin, that it would have pressed all the angels in heaven down to hell. There was need of the divine power to support under the divine wrath. Christ's human nature would have been overwhelmed with the heavy weight of God's wrath, had not the divine nature strengthened and upheld it.

2. 'That his obedience and sufferings might be of an infinite price and value.' That which made the obedience and death of Christ to be of such an infinite value, was, that it was the obedience and death of the Son of God, of him who was God as well as man.

Secondly, 'His human nature is expressed in this word, *Man.*' Christ being the Son of God, became man, by assuming the human nature to the divine. The reasons, why it was requisite that man's Saviour should be Man as well as God; are these.

1. In general, 'That he might die;' for the doom against sin, 'Thou shalt die the death;' Gen. ii. 17. went out of God's mouth before sin was committed. Now every word of God must stand; sin therefore being committed, death must be undergone; and Christ, who undertakes to be our Redeemer, must die for our sins: but as God, he could not die, therefore it was requisite that he should assume such a nature as was subject to death.

2. 'That in the same nature which had sinned, satisfaction for sin might be made. Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead;' 1 Cor. xv. 21.

Justice required, that the nature which sinned should die for sin; Mercy therefore afforded such a surety, as might be agreeable to Justice.

IV. In the next place followeth, 'the union of the two natures, in our blessed Saviour,' expressed in this phrase, 'God and man in one person.' He being God, assumed the human nature into the unity of his divine person: which union is not by conversion of the Godhead into the manhood, nor of the manhood into the Godhead; but it is such an union, as makes two natures one person, and yet the natures remain distinct, as we see in the union of man's soul and body. The soul is a spiritual substance, the body is a carnal substance; yet, both these united, make but one man, one person. So, Christ's divine and human nature being united, make but one person, never to be severed one from the other: but he continueth to be God and man in two distinct natures, and one person for ever. The reason of this union was, because he was to be Mediator between God and man, and to reconcile God to man, and man to God; meet therefore it was he should have interest in both natures.

Appl. This affordeth several uses.

1. *Of admiration.* For Christ's taking our human nature into his divine, was the most incredible thing that ever was. And truly, supreme majesty to be clothed with the rags of our humanity, the Deity to be incarnated, is such a thing, that speech cannot express it, wit cannot conceive it, but men and angels stand amazed at it.

2. *Of information,* 'To inform us of the great advancement of our human nature, by Christ's assuming it unto union with his divine.' For, hereby man's nature is highly advanced and honoured above the nature of angels. So, as we may well cry out with the Psalmist, Psalm viii. 4. 'Lord, what is man, that thou art mindful of him? Or the son of man, that thou so regardest him?'

3. *Of exhortation;* 'How should the consideration hereof stir us up to a serious inquisition, what we should do for the honour of Jesus Christ, who hath so far honoured us?' the truth is, As it is a sign of an honest and thankful heart, so it is our duty, and will be our wisdom, to be often casting and contriving with ourselves

what we may do, whereby we may bring glory unto Christ, who hath so far honoured us.

24. *Q.* How did the Son of God take to himself man's nature?

A. The Son of God did take to himself man's nature, by being conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary, by the Holy Ghost, and born of her, but free from sin.

Expl. This answer setteth forth Christ's incarnation, in which are two things especially to be noted.

I. 'That our blessed Saviour became man,' Acts xvii. 31. He was not only in the form and fashion, or shape of a man, but a true and real man.

First, 'He had the two essential parts of a man,' an human body, and a reasonable soul.

Secondly, 'He took on him the frailties and infirmities of man?' only here note, that of human infirmities.

1. 'Some are personal,' such as befal particular persons, arising from accidental causes; such as, *madness*, *blindness*, *deafness*; and these Christ did not assume: for he took not any man's person, but the nature of man upon him.

2. 'Some are common to all men,' as *hunger*, *thirst*, *weariness*, *grief*; and such as these Christ was subject to: man's sinful infirmities he took not.

II. 'How Christ took man's nature.' To this it is answered,

'By his being conceived in the womb of the virgin Mary by the Holy Ghost, and born of her.'

First, 'He was conceived by the Holy Ghost:' By whom,

1. 'His body was miraculously formed of the substance of the woman, without the concurrence of man.

2. It was sanctified and separated from sin, in the very instant of its forming.

Secondly, 'He was born of the virgin Mary.' Of a virgin; for so it was prophesied of him, Isa. vii. 14. And her name is mentioned, that it might be known that she was of the lineage of David, from whom the Messiah was to spring.

Appl. 1. 'This doth inform us of the transcendent love of Christ to our souls.' That for us men, and for our salvation, he should so far humble himself, as not only to become man, but to be conceived in the womb of a poor virgin, and therein to abide some months. O the amazing, matchless love of Christ therein!

2. 'This should teach us to be content with any abasement for Christ's sake;' and willingly stoop to any thing wherein we may do him service; yea, to be of no reputation for his sake.

25. *Q.* What offices did Christ take upon him to work out our salvation?

A. Christ took upon him three offices; he became a Prophet, a Priest, and a King.

Herein Christ was exalted above all the sons of men. There

have been some amongst men, that have been in one or two of these offices; but no man in all three, as a learned man observes; Moses was a prophet, Aaron was a priest, Solomon was a king, Melchisedec was king and priest, Samuel was priest and prophet, David was king and prophet; but only Christ was King, Priest, and Prophet.

26. *Q.* What is the chief work of Christ's prophetical office?

A. The chief work of Christ's prophetical office, is, to make known the Father's will unto his church, by his word and Spirit.

Expl. Three things are here to be observed.

1. 'That Christ is the prophet or teacher of his church:' according to that, Acts vii. 37.

2. 'What is it, that Christ taught or revealed to his church? This is expressed to be *the will of his Father;* that is, All that which God will have us to believe, or to do, in order to our salvation; all matters of *doctrine*, and all matters of *duty*. There is nothing necessary to be believed or known; there is nothing necessary to be done, towards our obtaining salvation, but Christ our prophet revealeth it to us.

3. 'How Christ revealeth it to us;' namely,

First, *By his word:* both by the scriptures, which are his written word; and by his *ministers*, who are to preach and to expound his written word: concerning whom he therefore saith, Luke x. 36. 'He that heareth you heareth me:' when ministers preach to you, Christ preacheth to you by them: when ministers instruct you, Christ instructeth by them.

Secondly, *By his Spirit.* The word, by his ministry of it, preacheth to the ears, the Spirit preacheth to the heart, the word lays down, and lays before us all the will of God; and the Spirit lays open, expounds and applies it to us. Christ doth not teach by the word, without the Spirit; nor doth he teach by the Spirit, without the word; but by both conjunctly.

Appl. 1. 'Let no man's preaching be regarded or embraced,' if it be not according to, and out of the written word; Isa. viii. 20. 'To the law and to the testimony: If they speak not according to this word, it is, because there is no light in them.'

2. 'Let no man satisfy himself with the bare teaching of a man, though a minister of Christ.' Lift up thine heart, for the Spirit, both to enlighten thee in the understanding of the word, and effectually to apply and work it upon thine heart.

3. 'Is Christ the prophet and teacher of his church? then let all Christians learn of him:' So he requires, Mat. xi. 29. *Learn of me.* To pass by matters of doctrine at present, there are three great practical lessons, which he teaches all his disciples, Mat. xvi. 24. 'If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me.'

27. *Q.* What are the parts of Christ's priestly office?

A. The parts of Christ's priestly office, are, To make satisfaction, and intercession.

Expl. I. The first part he did when upon earth, by offering up himself a sacrifice to satisfy *divine justice*. The latter he doth in heaven; sitting at God's right hand, he ceaseth not to make intercession for us.

For the better clearing the fore-mentioned particulars, know,

1. 'The sacrifice which Christ, as priest, offered up, was himself.' Indeed the human nature of Christ, only was offered up. For the Deity, simply considered in itself, could not suffer, much less be offered up a sacrifice; yet, by reason of the near union of the two *natures* in one *person*, he is said *to offer up himself*. Heb. vii. 27. and to *give himself*, as Eph. v. 2. This title, *himself*, having reference to that person, who was both God and man, sheweth the price of our redemption to be of infinite value.

2. 'The chief end of Christ's offering up himself a sacrifice, was to make satisfaction to God's justice for our sins, and so to reconcile us unto God.' Christ's sacrifice on the cross was of such efficacy, that God's justice was thereby abundantly satisfied for the sins of his people. Yea, it was sufficient for the sins of all men, which appeareth, as by the extremity of his suffering, so, by the dignity of his person, which was such as made his sufferings for a time, to be equivalent to our deserved sufferings for ever.

II. 'The other part of Christ's priestly office in his making intercession for us;' which he doth several ways.

1. 'By presenting himself to his father for us;' as Heb. ix. 24. 'Christ is entered into heaven, to appear in the presence of God for us.'

2. 'By manifesting his will to have such and such partakers of his sacrifice;' John xvii. 24. saith our Saviour, 'Father, I will, that they also whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am, that they may behold my glory.'

The word *intercession* properly signifieth *supplication for another*.

It is attributed to Christ, especially as he is in heaven, by way of resemblance. The resemblance may be taken from the favourite of a king, who is always at court in the king's presence, and thereupon presents his friend's petition to his majesty, and intercedes for him until it be granted. Yet, must we not literally take Christ's intercession, as if in heaven he prostrated himself before his Father, and made actual supplication to him. These things were a part of his humiliation which he performed on earth, Heb. v. 7. He is now exalted, and the things which now remain for him, as our priest, to be done, are matters of dignity and authority; which may all be brought to the two heads before-mentioned.

1. 'A presenting himself to God for us.'

2. 'A presenting his will for our salvation.'

Appl. 1. 'Hath Christ offered up himself a sacrifice for thee?

Offer thou thyself a sacrifice to him,' Rom. xii. 1. Look upon thyself as no longer thine own, but become wholly the Lord's, *a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.* Hath Christ been a sacrifice for thee, and wilt thou still sacrifice thyself to the devil and thine own heart's lusts? God forbid. Give thyself to the Lord, to glorify him in thy body, and in thy spirit, which are his; 1 Cor. vi. 20.

2. 'Doth Christ make intercession for thee? Doth Christ pray for thee? then thou mayest with the more confidence pray for thyself.' Whenever thou prayest for pardon of thy sins, for power against sin, for grace, peace, or comfort, or whatever good thing thou wantest, O what hope is there, that thou mayest prevail and obtain what thou prayest for, when Christ himself joins in prayer with thee!

28. *Q.* What are the parts of Christ's kingly office?

A. Christ as King doth govern his church, provides for her all needful good things, and protects her from all enemies.

I. 'Christ as King, governeth his church and people,' Now Christ's governing his church, is partly *external*, and partly *internal.*

First, 'External, by his word.' Christ governs by laws, and his laws are in his word. The scriptures are Christ's statute-book, by which he governs, where his laws are revealed; and also by such *officers* as he hath appointed to stand in his room, to put his laws and orders in execution.

Secondly, 'Christ's governing his church, is partly internal, by his Spirit.' By this internal government, he so powerfully works upon them, as he makes them willingly to subject themselves to him, Psal. cx. 3. In governing them inwardly by his Spirit, Christ enlightens their understanding, boweth their wills to his, setteth their affections on right objects, and wholly reneweth them. Thus can no other king govern his people; they cannot inwardly work obedience and subjection in them.

II. 'Christ as King provides for his church.' His providing extends to all things needful for soul or body, even to all temporal or spiritual blessings. For temporal blessings, we read that they who followed Christ, professed, that they lacked nothing; Luke xxii. 35.

If in wisdom he suffer any of his to want, he can, and will teach them, as he taught his apostle, contentedly and comfortably to be hungry, and suffer need, as well as wisely to be full and abound, Phil. iv. 12. 'As for spiritual blessings,' that which the apostle saith of the saints at Corinth, 1 Cor. i. 7. is true of all saints every where; *They come behind in no gift*, or they are destitute of none. Yea, further, Christ as the King of heaven, provides an heavenly inheritance for us, Mat. xix. 29.

III. 'Christ as King protects his church.' And his protecting

of his church, extends as far as his providing for it: for he protects it from temporal, spiritual, and eternal enemies. The rest which the church had in the apostles' time, giveth instance of his protecting it from temporal evils. If he suffer it to be afflicted, it is voluntarily and wisely, for his own glory, and his church's good; and he will afford her sufficient support in the greatest trials.

The assistance which saints have against Satan and his temptations, giveth evidence of his protecting them from spiritual enemies: and their freedom from damnation, Rom. viii. 1. doth the like in regard of eternal evils.

Christ protects his church from his enemies: First, *By restraining them.* Secondly, *By conquering them.*

1. For the first, 'Christ, as King, doth powerfully restrain the enemies of his church,' from executing their wrath and rage against them; Psalm lxxvi. 10. 'The remainder of wrath thou wilt restrain,' that is, When he hath suffered their rage to boil up to that heighth, as to accomplish his own gracious ends, then he puts a stop, suffers it to rise no higher, nor to continue longer than he pleases: neither men nor devils shall strike a stroke, nor speak against the saints, farther than the Lord permits them. He hath them all in chains; and though they will go to the utmost, yet they cannot go an inch beyond their chain.

3. 'Christ, as King, will conquer and destroy his, and his church's enemies.' He will tread them under his feet, and destroy them. 'He must reign, till he hath put all his enemies under his feet,' 1 Cor. xv. 25. The saints are the wheat, the enemies are the chaff; the Son of man shall preserve, 'and gather the wheat into his garner; but the chaff shall be burnt up with unquenchable fire,' Mat. iii. 12.

Appl. Learn hence, 1. 'To own Christ as your King, and that not by giving him the verbal title of *King*, but by paying him *tribute*, and yielding him the *homage* and *obedience*, which is due to him; *Why call ye me Lord, and do not the things that I say?*

2. 'Prove yourselves to be Christ's subjects;' which you may do by these following particulars:

1. 'By your universal obedience to all his laws.' Christ's subjects will not deal partially; obey in some things, and refuse in others; but *will have respect to all his commandments*, Ps. cxix. 6.

2. 'By the constitution of your spirits, and the course of your lives.' Christ's kingdom is not of this world, and his subjects are no men of this world. They neither have the *spirit of this world*, an earthly mind; nor seek *their portion in this world*, an earthly portion; nor have *their conversation according to this world*, a carnal conversation; but their hearts, and their portion, and their conversation is in heaven.

Wouldst thou know, Whether Christ be thy King? enquire,

Whether thou be his subject? Hast thou unfeignedly resigned up thyself unto his dominion? And dost thou walk before him in all good conscience, and all manner of holy conversation? Doth both thine heart and thy life say to him, *Lord, I am thine?* Surely, he then saith to thee, *Soul, thou art mine.*

29. *Q.* How far did Christ humble himself for our redemption?

A. Christ humbled himself in his birth, life, death, burial, and lying in the grave.

Expl. This answer contains several parts and degrees of our Saviour's humiliation.

1. 'Christ humbled himself in his birth,' in that he, who was God from all eternity, was in the fulness of time born of a woman, the great Creator of a creature.

Yea, Christ was born in a low condition, in which respect he is said to take upon him 'the form of a servant.' He who was in the form of God, condescended to take 'the form of a servant;' that is, the nature of man in a low and servile state. Christ's birth was attended with many abasing circumstances.

1. He was born, not in a princely palace, but in *a common Inn.*

2. Not in the best chamber, but in the *very stable.*

3. Being born, he was wrapped up in mean and poor swaddling clothes, and laid in a *manger*, instead of a *cradle*, Luke ii. 11.

II. Christ humbled himself in his life, in two particulars, especially:

First, 'In that he was made under the law to fulfil it, which he did to the utmost.' He who was the Lawgiver, and in that respect above the law, subjected himself thereunto, both to the *ceremonial* and *moral* law. To the ceremonial, in being circumcised the eighth day: and to the moral law, in observing the precepts thereof.

And whereas the law requireth of us not only an *active obedience*, in doing what is commanded; but likewise a *passive obedience*, in suffering the punishment threatened upon our disobedience; we being unable, either to do the one, or suffer the other: Jesus Christ, as our surety, in our stead did both perform what we should have done, and suffered what we should have borne: in which respect he is said, 'to be made under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law,' Gal. iv. 4.

Secondly, 'Christ humbled himself in his life by undergoing the miseries of this life.' His whole life was a continued suffering, even from his birth to his death.

1. 'In his infancy,' before he could go, he is constrained to flee into Egypt for the preservation of his life from cruel Herod, who thirsted after his blood. The world no sooner received Christ, but it persecuted him; chasing him into foreign countries, Matth. ii. 13.

2. 'In his youth he humbled himself,' by taking pains in the

poor occupation of his supposed father Joseph, as appeareth by the question of the people, Mat. vi. 3. 'Is not this the carpenter?'

During his abode upon earth, he was subject to all human infirmities and afflictions, which are generally incident to all men, as heat and cold, hunger and thirst, weariness, poverty, and the like.

3. 'When he began to execute his ministerial office,' then was he grievously assaulted with Satan's powerful and subtile temptations. He spendeth his life in doing well, and hearing ill. He is reproachfully called an *impostor*, a *deceiver*, a *friend of publicans and sinners;* and what not?

4. 'But especially towards the latter end of his life, in his agony in the garden;' when he was deeply affected with the sense and apprehension of the wrath of God incensed against our sins; as appeareth by several effects which followed hereupon; as,

First, 'It forced strong cries and tears from him for freedom from the same, in these words, 'Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me;' that is, the cup of his Father's wrath, which our sins had imbittered.

Secondly, 'It put him into a bloody sweat.' The Evangelist saith, 'his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood falling down to the ground;' and that in a cold night: for we read of a fire in the high priest's hall. The devil could never make him sweat, nor the cruelty of his enemies, nor any of his painful labours and travels; but the wrath of God makes him sweat till the blood come.

III. 'Christ humbled himself in his death, undergoing the bitter death of the cross.' He was put to this kind of death, partly, 'by the wise providence of God,' it being a *cursed death*, and partly, 'by the malice of his enemies,' they knowing it to be both a *shameful* and a *painful death*. So that the death on the cross was a *cursed*, *shameful* and *painful* death.

1. 'It was a cursed death;' For the Lord of old had pronounced, that he, 'who is hanged, is accursed of God,' Deut. xxi. 23. Whereupon saith the apostle, Gal. iii. 13. 'Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.'

2. 'The death on the cross was a shameful death, in that such as were crucified hung naked.'

3. 'The death on the cross was a painful death,' in three respects.

First, Because the hands and feet, being above all other parts of the body most sensible of torment, by reason that they abound with nerves and sinews, the instruments of sense and feeling, were pierced and nailed to the cross with great nails. So as that expression of the church, Lam. i. 22. may truly be applied to our Saviour, 'Behold and see, is there any sorrow like to my sorrow,

which is done unto me; wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me in the day of his fierce anger.'

Secondly, 'The death on the cross was painful, because it was a long and lingering death: hanging several hours before they gave up the ghost.' Mark xv. 25. we read, that it was the *third hour* when they crucified our Saviour, that is, they fastened him to the cross about nine of the clock in the morning: and in verse 34. we read, that, 'At the ninth hour Jesus cried with a loud voice, and soon after gave up the Ghost, which was at three of the clock in the afternoon. So that our blessed Saviour hung six hours upon the cross, and in every minute of each hour endured such exquisite torment, as exceeded the pangs of an ordinary death, whereof the whole world seemed sensible, and was much afflicted therewith; for the *sun in the firmament*, at noon-day drew in his beams; 'from twelve to three of the clock, there was a darkness over all the earth,' Luke xxiii. 44. Being unwilling, as it were, to see such a barbarous cruelty offered to the Son of God, and Saviour of the world; and was clothed with black to celebrate his death. The earth itself shook and trembled under it; and the very rocks rent asunder, as if they had a sense and feeling of his unconceivable pain and torment. And, the whole frame of nature seemed astonished at so dreadful a tragedy.

Thirdly, 'It was a painful death, because it was ordinarily accompanied with whippings and scourgings;' which, as it was used by the Romans, was a most grievous punishment.

IV. 'Christ being dead, was buried, which was another degree of his humiliation,' whereby he was brought to the very dust; yea, the manner of his burial was very mean, being without all pomp and ostentation.

V. 'The last degree of his humiliation was his lying in the grave for a time.' The time wherein he lay in the grave was from the even of *Friday* (Mat. xxvii. 57.) to the breaking of day in the morning of the Lord's Day. Mat. xxviii. 1. For he was buried in the even before the Jew's Sabbath, and lay in the grave all that Sabbath-day, and rose about the beginning of the first day of the week, which was a great degree of humiliation, because he was so long held in captivity and bondage under death.

Appl. 1. 'This doth inform us of the heinous nature of sin.' Sure it was a monstrous evil that brought forth such a monstrous effect. Never make light of sin more, which killed the Lord of life. Thy sins (Oh man whoever thou art) have had a hand in this horrid fact.

2. 'The consideration of Christ's humiliation and suffering,' should stir us up to admire and adore the unconceivable love of God the father, in giving his Son, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, in giving himself, to be born in such a low condition, to live such a life, and die such a death for poor worms. Surely, *great is the*

mystery of Godliness, and greatly to be admired; *God manifested in the flesh*, 1 Tim. iii. 16.

3. 'Labour we to answer this love of Christ.'

1. 'By our readiness to suffer for him, whatever he calls us to.' O let us do our best to live to him; yea and be willing to die for his name who lived and died for us.

2. 'By our dying to sin.' Thy sin it is which hath crucified thy King. O let it not live, neither live thou any longer in the love, and under the power of it. Say of thy pride, of thy covetousness, of thy sinful pleasures, and of all thy fleshly lusts, as they said of him, 'Away with them, away with them; let them be crucified.' Say to thyself, 'O my soul, seeing my Lord died for sin, how shall I live any longer therein!'

30. *Q.* What are the degrees of Christ's exaltation after his humiliation?

A. The degrees of Christ's exaltation are, his resurrection, his ascension, his sitting at God's right hand, and his judging the world at the last day.

Expl. I. 'The first was his resurrection.' The scripture telleth us, that *on the third day he arose from the dead*, 1 Cor. xv. 4. and that with the same body in which he suffered. As he laid down his life, so he took it up again, by his own power, whereby he declared himself to be the Son of God, to have fully satisfied divine justice, and to have vanquished death and the devil.

Christ's resurrection is a certain infallible truth, which is evident beyond all contradiction, whereof there were many eye-witnesses, who saw him and talked with him, after he arose, as appears, 1 Cor. xv. 5, 6, 7, 8.

II. 'The second degree of Christ's exaltation, was his ascending up to heaven.' Which is likewise a certain truth, apparent, as from many other scriptures; so especially from Acts i. 9, 10, 11.

III. 'The third degree of Christ's exaltation, is his sitting at the right hand of God his Father.' This is a metaphorical expression often used in scripture. For, to speak properly, God hath neither right hand nor left; he is a Spirit, and therefore hath no bodily parts or dimensions. But the words are a borrowed speech from earthly kings, whose custom is to place such persons at the right hand, whom they would highly honour.

So that by Christ's sitting at the right hand of God, is meant,

1. 'His exaltation into the highest pitch of glory,' above all creatures in heaven, and in earth.

2. 'His exaltation into the highest degree of power and authority;' whereby, as Lord and King, he governeth the world, and that in order to the good of his church and people. Not that the Father doth cease to rule, but he doth it by his Son, having committed the execution and administration of all judgment unto him, until all the enemies of the church be utterly subdued, which

will not be until after the day of judgment. And then will Christ deliver up his kingdom and government unto his father; yet, as God equal with his Father, Christ hath a natural kingdom which will never cease.

IV. 'Another degree of Christ's exaltation, is his judging the world at the last day.'

Divines do much differ about the length of the last day: some affirm it to be a thousand years: others, that it will be only a natural day: others, that it will be neither a truly natural nor artificial day, as we account. But, seeing the length of this last day is not expressed in scripture, it becomes us not to limit the same.

Appl. 1. 'Let Christians learn to be conformed unto Christ, as in his humiliation, so also in his exaltation.' As we must *descend with Christ*, and be crucified with him, so we must rise with Christ; as he *from the grave*, so we *from sin*. And we must also ascend with Christ. Christ is gone from earth to heaven, and thither also must our hearts ascend after him; Col. iii. 1, 2. If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above; where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God: Set your affections on things above, not on things on the earth.

Friends, Are you Christians indeed? O prove your Christianity by your rising and ascending. Set your hearts on things above, and not on the earth. It is the mark of the vessels of destruction, *that they mind earthly things;* Phil. iii. 19.

2. 'Shall Christ come to judge the world?' let us learn,

First, 'To live as those that must be judged, so speak, and so do, as those that must be judged;' James ii. 12. Thou that rejoicest in the days of thy youth, who walkest in the way of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes, fulfilling the desires and lusts of thy flesh, and of thy mind; remember thy reckoning day, *Know, that for all these things God will bring thee to judgment;* Eccles. xi. 9. Thou that takest thy liberty of foolish and filthy talking, of lying, swearing, or cursing: Is this *so to speak*, as a man that must be judged? that thou livest in idleness, or wantonness; in worldliness, or lasciviousness: Is this, *so to live*, as a man that must be judged? O, how wilt thou appear? How wilt thou answer for all, or any of these things, before the righteous judge of heaven and earth.

Secondly, 'Labour to get Christ to be your friend, your Judge to be your advocate.' Ah sinners beware of neglecting Christ, at your peril, or to provoke him by your impenitence and hardness of heart. God hath made him your Judge, whom by your sins you go on still to make your enemy. Go sinner, go to Christ this day, lay down thy arms, and lie at his feet: break off thy sins by repentance, resign up thyself to his dominion, take his yoke upon thee. Let him be from henceforth thy Lord, and he will be thy

friend in thy judgment. O tremble to think of judgment, while the Judge is thine enemy; go speedily and make him thy friend.

31. *Q.* How comes Christ and those things which he did and suffered, to be ours?

A. By faith which unites us unto Christ, in our effectual calling.

Expl. Here are two things to be observed.

1. 'That believers are united unto Christ.

2. 'That this union of believers in Christ, is by faith;' of which I shall treat afterwards.

For the first, 'That believers are united unto Christ,' is evident, as from the multitude of other scriptures, so especially from the 17th chapter of St. John, in divers verses of that chapter.

There is betwixt Christ and believers,

1. *A mystical union;* Eph. v. 32. This mystical union is shadowed out in scripture, by the union of the husband and wife; of the vine and branches: in special, by the union of the head and the body. Christ and his saints do make one corporation, whereof he is the *head*, and they are the *members;* by which they have mutual right each to other.

2. There is betwixt Christ and his saints, a *moral union*, 1 Cor. vi. 17. 'He that is joined to the Lord is one spirit;' he is of the same mind, of the same heart with the Lord Jesus. He is made like unto him, holy as he is holy, meek as he is meek.

Appl. 'Let Christians prove their mystical union with Christ by their moral union.' Art thou made like unto Christ, changed into the same image? Art thou humble, meek and lowly, as he was? Art thou holy as he is holy? this will prove thee a member of his body.

32. *Q.* What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit, whereby our understanding being enlightened with the knowledge of our miserable condition, and of Christ as our remedy, we are persuaded to close with *Jesus Christ*, as our only Saviour and Redeemer.

Expl. For the better clearing this great grace of *effectual calling;* take notice, that there is a twofold call to grace:

I. 'A general and external call.'

II. 'A special and internal call.'

I. 'An external call by the ministry of the word, inviting all that hear it to turn from their sins, and come unto Christ.' Which call some obey, others refuse. Of which call our Saviour spake, Mat. xx. 16. 'Many are called, but few are chosen.' This external call is not always effectual to salvation, yet, it is sufficient to leave men without excuse.

II. 'An internal call,' when the holy Spirit accompanying the outward ministry of the word, doth by his powerful operation, effectually bring the heart to Christ.

This *effectual calling*, (which is the same thing with regenera-

tion, conversion, and repentance, though expressed in a different notion) I shall clear unto you, by shewing you the several works of the Spirit, by which he brings it about; as,

1. 'By convincing us of our sin and misery,' John xvi. 8. that is, by making men know themselves sinful and miserable creatures; and in a deep sense of it to cry out, 'Oh, I am undone, being a sinful lost soul! woe is me, how shall I escape the damnation of hell?'

2. 'The Spirit of God having convinced us of our sin and misery, enlightens our minds in the knowledge of Jesus Christ;' what an all-sufficient Saviour he is, able to save to the utmost from all our sins and fears; and how willing and ready he is to receive and embrace all those who sincerely come unto him.

3. 'The Spirit of God having enlightened our minds in the knowledge of Christ, reneweth our wills;' that is, worketh such a gracious change upon them, whereby we become pliable to, and resolved for, obedience to the will of God; Psalm cx. 3.

4. 'The Spirit of God having thus renewed our wills, and thereby enabled us, he persuades us to embrace Jesus Christ, as our only Saviour and Redeemer;' that is, by his most weighty arguments, his importunate invitations, and beseechings, he draws our consent to Jesus Christ; the fruit and issue of all which is, our coming in, and accepting of, and adventuring upon our offered Redeemer.

Applic. 1. Use. *Of Examination.* By what hath been said, put thyself upon trial, whether thou be effectually called or not.

1. 'Hast thou been convinced of sin?' Hath the Spirit of the Lord made thee to know thyself a sinner, a vile sinner, a lost and undone sinner; so that thou hast received the sentence of death in thyself, and made thee cry out, 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me?' Art thou, or hast thou ever been such a convinced sinner?

2. 'Art thou enlightened with the knowledge of Christ?' When thou hast been convinced of *sin*, wert thou also convinced of *righteousness;* that is, that there is in Christ the righteous, a righteousness, for *sinners*, that is sufficient to save sinners; that is free for all sinners to come in, and lay hold upon, and for thee in particular?

3. 'How standeth it with thy will?' Art thou willing to come to Christ, whose arms and heart are open to receive all coming sinners? Once thou hadst no mind to Christ, thou hadst more mind to thy sins, to thy pleasures, and companions, than to Christ. Time was, when thou wouldst not come unto him, that thou mightest have life. But, hath the Lord now, by the power of his Spirit, renewed, and graciously changed thy will, so that thou canst say, 'I am willing, I am resolved for Christ, I am resolved to trust upon him as my Righteousness, to take him for my Lord

and King, to give up myself to him for his disciple?' If this be thy heart and will, be of good comfort, thou art one of the called of the Lord.

2. *Use of Exhortation.* Of this Use, there shall be these two branches;

1. 'If thou doubtest thou art not thus wrought upon, nor brought into Christ, consider what is thy present purpose.'

Art thou resolved still to slight the gracious calls and invitations of Christ? or now to close with them, and accept of an offered Christ? Art thou willing this present day to forsake thy sinful courses? to give a bill of divorce to all thy former lovers? and to take Christ for thy Lord and Husband, and to devote, and give up thyself to him? Oh! how happy would it be for thee, if this very day it might be done.

2. 'If thou findest that thou art indeed one of the called of God,' be exhorted 'To walk worthy of the vocation wherewith you are called.' To that end,

1. Walk humbly. 2. Walk thankfully. 3. Be faithful in every good work. 4. Be watchful against every evil work.

Do nothing unworthy that worthy name by which thou art now called, and abound in every good thing, wherein thou mayest walk worthy the Lord unto all pleasing: Col. i. 10.

33. *Q.* What privileges do accompany such as are effectually called?

A. The privileges which accompany our effectual calling, are, Justification, Adoption, and Sanctification.

34. *Q.* What is Justification?

A. Justification is an act of God's free grace; whereby he pardoneth our sins; and accepteth us as righteous in his sight, upon the account of Christ's righteousness, and satisfaction received and applied by faith.

In the answer; there are these things observed,

I. 'The efficient cause,' or author of justification, who is God alone; Rom. viii. 33. 'Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth.'

II. 'The moving cause,' which is no other but the free grace of God; Rom. iii. 24. 'Being justified freely by his grace.'

Obj. If our justification be only from free grace; how is it said to be for the righteousness of Christ?

Ans. In respect of us, or any thing done by us, it is free grace.

2. It was the free grace of God which moved him to find us out a Redeemer, and to accept of his righteousness for ours.

III. 'The matter or material cause of our justification is the righteousness of Christ:' that is, His whole obedience, both *active* and *passive*. His *active obedience*, which consisted in submitting himself to the law of God, and fulfilling the same. And his *passive obedience*, which compriseth under it all his sufferings, even

from his birth to his death. This is the righteousness whereby a believer is justified before God, received into his grace and favour, and hath a title given him unto the heavenly inheritance.

We are not justified by any works of our own, either done before our believing in Jesus Christ; for no man in an unregenerate estate, can do any works truly good and pleasing unto God; or done after grace received, and faith wrought in us; for all such works are imperfect, being accompanied with manifold weaknesses, and infirmities. In which respect, they are so far from being matter of justification unto us, that they deserve rather to be matter of condemnation.

IV. 'The instrumental cause, or recipient instrument of our justification, is a true and lively faith;' I mean, such a faith as is followed by obedience and productive of it; which is the spiritual hand whereby we receive and lay hold upon Christ, with all the benefits both of his active and passive obedience; whereupon we are said, Rom. iii. 28. *To be justified by faith*, which is called, *Our receiving Christ;* John i. 12.

V. 'The parts of our justification are two.'

1. 'The pardon of all our sins.'

2. 'Our acceptation as righteous in the sight of God, upon the account of Christ's righteousness and satisfaction.'

Behold the wonderful love of God to believers, evidenced in these two instances:

First, That which is our own, namely, our sins, because they make us miserable; he taketh from us, and layeth on his own Son, 'who was made sin for us;' as 2 Cor. vi. 21.

Secondly, That which is none of our own, namely, Christ's righteousness, because without it we cannot be happy, he accounts ours, and accepts for us, as if it were our own; which I conceive to be the proper import of the phrase, 'of imputing Christ's righteousness unto us:' whereby I suppose is meant, 'That God doth reckon the righteousness of Christ unto believers, as if it were their own.' He doth account to them Christ's sufferings and satisfaction, and makes them partakers of the virtue of it, as if themselves had suffered and satisfied.

Appl. 'Though we are not justified by any works of our own, but only on the account of the perfect righteousness and full satisfaction of Christ, yet, without our own inherent righteousness, we can have no evidence of our justification, nor well-grounded hope of salvation: for without holiness no man shall see the Lord,' Heb. xii. 14. None can be vessels of glory, but such as are first seasoned with grace, 1 Cor. vi. 9. *Know ye not*, saith the Apostle, *that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God. Be not therefore deceived:*' as if he had said, It is a certain truth, that such as live impenitently in the wilful practice of any known sin, or in the wilful neglect of any known duty, though they may flatter themselves

with an hope of salvation, yet will fall short of it. So that, however we exclude works from the act of justifying, yet we necessarily enquire them in the person justified. Whilst we disclaim a righteousness of works, establish the works of righteousness.

Two things Christians should resolve upon.

1. To abound in the works of holiness, as they would have done, if those must have been their righteousness.

2. Yet to rest as wholly on the righteousness of Christ, as if they have never done good works in their lives.

35. Q. What is Adoption?

A. Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are not only accounted, but taken into the number, and invested with all the privileges of the children of God.

Expl. In this answer is set forth,

I. 'The author of our adoption;' namely, 'God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' who is pleased in and for his Son Jesus Christ, to make all those that are justified, partakers of the grace of adoption.

II. 'The moving cause of it,' which is the free grace of God, or the good pleasure of his will; As the apostle expresseth, Eph. i. 5. This, and this alone, was that which moved God to send Christ out of his own bosom, to take our nature upon him, that so he might become a Son of man, thereby to make us sons of God.

III. 'The nature of this adoption:' which consisteth in two branches:

1. 'In taking us into the number, and giving us the relation of the children of God, who are by nature children of wrath.' O, what a strange change is hereby made! whereas before we were the children of the devil, now we are the children of God.

2. 'God's adopting consists in giving us a right to all the privileges of his children.' As God will not be put off with the bare title of *Father*, so neither will he put us off with the bare title of his *children*. The children of God are privileged persons: They are the children of his care, the children of his love and delight; they have the freedom of children, the protection of children, and every one of them a child's portion.

Appl. 1. Learn the duty of children:

First. 'Disgrace not your high privilege by a vain and vile conversation.' It is very unworthy the child of a prince to go in rags and tatters, to be a companion with rogues and beggars. Surely a sinful, sensual life is as unworthy, and much more unworthy a child of God. O you that are the children of the Most High, live more noble and honourable lives. Be humble, but be not base; walk worthy the Lord to all pleasing.

Secondly, 'Give God the honour of your Father, Mal. i. 6. Honour your Father.'

1. 'By loving God as your Father.'

2. 'By obeying him as your Father.'
3. 'By trusting upon Him.'
4. 'By submitting to his correction.'
5. 'By committing yourselves to his protection.'
6. 'By being content with his provision.'

36. Q. What is sanctification?

A. Sanctification is a work of God's free grace, whereby we are renewed throughout according to the image of God, in holiness and righteousness; 'and are enabled to die to sin, and to live unto righteousness.'

Expl. In this answer there are six things chiefly to be explained.

I. 'The principal Author of our sanctification, is God.' As he alone justifieth us, freeing us from the guilt and punishment of sin, so he only sanctifieth us; delivering us from the power and dominion of sin.

II. 'The moving cause of our sanctification is, the free grace of God.' It is free grace that makes difference between a saint and a sinner.

III. 'The manner how we are sanctified;' namely, 'By the Spirit renewing us.' For the better understanding whereof, we are to know, that upon our closing with Jesus Christ by faith, we are united unto him, and so made members of his mystical body; whereupon we do participate both of his death and resurrection. By virtue of his death, our sins are mortified, and our corruptions crucified together with him. And by virtue of his resurrection, there is a quickening power derived unto us, whereby we are revived and raised up from the death of sin, to holiness and newness of life; and so we become new men, renewed by the Spirit of God.

IV. 'The extent of our renovation,' how far we are renewed; which is through the whole man, through all the faculties of the soul, and members of the body.' In our *outward conversation* we walk *Antipodes* to our *former course of life:* there is now a *Spirit of holiness* working within, and breathing without in *sanctified discourses and ways.*

But though we are renewed in the *whole man*, yet are we *not wholly* renewed; *sanctification*, as to its degrees, begins *low*, but rises *higher and higher* daily. Though we are *renewed* throughout in all parts, yet in this life we are renewed but in part and imperfectly, till hereafter; 'When that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away,' 1 Cor. xiii. 10.

V. 'The pattern after which we are renewed, is the image of God;' in which man *was at first created*, being then *endowed* with true *knowledge*, *holiness* and *righteousness;* which image *was fearfully defaced* by the *fall of our first parents:* but in our *sanctification* is in some measure *renewed* by the *Holy Ghost;* Tit. iii. 5.

VI. The exercise of sanctification, or the parts wherein it consisteth.

First, 'In dying unto sin.' Then we die unto sin, when the *power of our corruption* is weakened and subdued in us more and more. Sin is not utterly destroyed, so long as we live in these earthly tabernacles; yet it is in believers *mortally wounded*, so as it loses its *vigour*, *power*, *strength*, and languishes more and more.

Secondly, 'In living unto righteousness, or in rising from the death of sin, to holiness, and newness of life.' So soon as a Christian is ingrafted into Christ by a true and lively faith, and so united unto him, he receiveth *virtue from Christ*, both to mortify the *power of his lust*, and to quicken his *dead soul;* raising him from the death of sin, to the life of grace, which consisteth in the practice of true holiness and righteousness.

Appl. The use that I shall make of this, shall be to press you to those two great duties, which are the parts of *sanctification;* namely, *mortification* and *vivification*.

I. 'Mortify your sin.' He that is the most mortified Christian, is the most sanctified Christian. But how shall we mortify sin? I answer,

1. 'Break off your league with sin.' He that ceaseth to be friends with sin, though he hath pride and covetousness, and other lusts still within him, and working and warring in his members, yet he is no friend to any of them. He that takes every lust for an enemy, and is an enemy against it, that groans under it, and feels it as a thorn and a briar, as his wound or disease, and can have no rest in his spirit, till it be subdued; this poor soul hath gotten something towards the mortification of his sin. Would you have sin die? then become its mortal enemy.

2. 'Cut down the main branches of sin;' those special particular lusts that you are most troubled with. Mark what special lusts they be that prevail most over thee, as pride, or covetousness, or envy, &c. and let thy hand be chiefly against these.

3. 'Shake off all thy evil fruits.' Cease from the practice of sin. The ceasing from the acts of sin will by degrees deaden its evil habits. Do not say, it is vain for me to think of mending my practice, till God mend my heart. Live a better life, and that will help towards the getting you a better heart. Wilt thou go on in thy drunkenness, or lying and swearing, or thy covetous practices, till thine heart be changed? When dost thou ever think thine heart will be changed, if thou wilt not change thy way?

'Look forth into thy life,' and see what evil practices thou canst find. 'Look into thy dealings with men,' and see what unrighteousness, or unmercifulness, or unfaithfulness thou canst find there. 'Look into thy dealing with God;' look into thy praying, and hearing, and all thy holy duties, and see what formality, what hypocrisy thou canst find in them. 'Look to thine eyes, thy

tongue, thine ears, and all thy members;' and consider the several evils of them. And whatever evils thou findest thyself guilty of, away with them, allow not thyself once more in any of thine evil doings. Say to all thine iniquities, root and branch, I must rid me of you all. This is the way to mortification.

II. For the other part of sanctification, namely, *vivification;* be exhorted to live unto righteousness, cease from a sinful, and give yourselves to an holy life. Both are joined together, Isa. i. 16, 17. 'Cease to do evil, learn to do well;' 2 Cor. vii. 1. 'Let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness both of flesh and spirit; perfecting holiness in the fear of God.' It will not suffice you, that you be not vicious, you must be holy in all manner of conversation. Do not only put an end to a loose and lewd life, but fall upon the practice of an holy and godly life. Live a life of faith, a life of love, a life of holy fear. Live an humble, meek, patient, self-denying, heavenly, fruitful life. This is to be sanctified throughout, and 'this is the will of God, even your (*total*) sanctification,' 1 Thess. iv. 3.

37. *Q.* What are the blessings which usually accompany God's justified, adopted, and sanctified ones?

A. Peace of conscience, joy in the Holy Ghost, and increase of grace.

Expl. Here are in this answer the riches of the saints, which belong unto them, even in this state of their poverty and imperfection in this life; expressed in three particulars:

I. 'Peace of conscience, Rom. v. 1. Being justified by faith, we have peace with God:' And walking uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, we have peace of conscience; 2 Cor. i. 12.

That we may have sound peace of conscience, our conscience must be,

1. 'A purged conscience,' purged with the blood of Christ.

2. 'A tender conscience,' that is startled at the smallest sin, and at the neglect of the smallest duty. A loose conscience may speak peace, but it is no sound peace.

3. 'A clear conscience,' a conscience without guile and without guilt of any allowed unrepented sin.

Is. lvii. 21. 'There is no peace, saith God, to the wicked.' They may seem to others, and to themselves to have peace; but it is a false and feigned peace, and no true peace. As Jehu said to Jehoram, 2 Kings ix. 22. 'What peace so long as the whoredoms of thy mother Jezebel and her witchcrafts are so many?' So God will say to the wicked, 'What peace so long as you allow yourselves in your iniquities?' God will speak no peace to such. And if conscience says, *It is peace;* and God says, *It is no peace;* such peace of conscience is worse than horror of conscience.

II. 'Joy in the Holy Ghost,' is another blessing which usually

accompanieth God's justified, adopted and sanctified ones, and is proper to them alone.

That prayer of the Apostle, Rom. xv. 13. belongs only to them; 'The God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing.'

I know it is the conceit of worldly, carnal men, that there is no joy to be found in the ways of godliness: whereas in truth it is clean contrary: there is no true joy to be found out of the ways of godliness: and no man can experience any solid joy until he be sincerely religious.

And whereas, some are ready to object and say, That none live such sad and uncomfortable lives as professors of religion. To such I answer: It is not their religion and godliness that makes them so sad, but rather their apprehension of the small measure thereof: because they are not so holy as they should be, and desire to be.

III. 'Increase of grace is another blessing.' As it is the duty of every believer, so it is his property and practice to grow and increase in grace. For true grace is of a growing nature, and increaseth from very small beginnings to a great height: The reason thereof, is, because grace is not perfect at the first, and therefore, there must be a growing, till we come to the highest pitch. And truly, grace is of so sweet and desirable a nature, that he who hath once tasted of the sweetness of it, cannot but desire more. 'And blessed are they that hunger and thirst after more righteousness, for they shall be filled:' Matth. v. 6.

Many, I know, are apt to complain, that they do not grow in grace, but rather stand at a stay, if not go backward. Take heed it be not so indeed with thee, for that is very sad: But take notice,

1. 'That a man may grow in grace, though he discern it not,' because this spiritual growth in the most is by insensible degrees.

2. 'Christians are not always competent judges of their own estate and growth in grace.' Sometimes they think better of themselves than in truth they are. At other times, as in times of temptation and spiritual desertion, they conclude worse of themselves than indeed their case deserveth; which cometh to pass partly, 'Through their spiritual poverty;' which maketh them to undervalue that good which is in them, and thereupon to take up low and mean thoughts of themselves.

And partly, 'through their earnest eager desire after a greater measure of grace,' which keeps them from discerning their growth therein. As the eager desire of some men after riches makes them think themselves poor, so the vehement longings of some christians after a greater measure of grace makes them to conclude, that they rather stand at a stay, than make any progress therein.

Appl. 1. 'Count not upon the possession of these choice blessings, without thy faithfulness in thy duty, and watchfulness

against sin :' There can be no securing thy peace and joy, but upon thy faithfulness in the covenant of thy God. If that grace thou hast, do not hold thee close to the practice of godliness, it is a sign it is not that grace, that true grace which will yield thee peace and joy; Acts ix. 31. It is said of the primitive saints, 'That they walked in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost;' because they walked in the fear of the Lord, therefore they found comfort, peace and joy. And certainly, one special reason why so many christians complain of the want of comfort, is their careless walking, and loose conversation.

2. 'Use of direction :' What a christian should do, when he cannot feel and find in himself those blessings of peace with God, and joy in the Holy Ghost, flowing from his justification.

1. 'Examine whether thou art not guilty of some heinous sin,' for which thou hast not yet been thoroughly humbled.

2. 'Examine whether thou art not more careless and remiss in the exercise of religion than formerly.'

3. 'Bewail this thy present state :' take up a lamentation, and say, 'Woe and alas, how sad is my condition, sitting in darkness, and having no light, no spark of comfort, no assurance of God's love to me!' Thus make thy closet a place of mourning: and know, that the mourning of thy soul will cause the yearning of God's bowels towards thee : so that he will not long withhold comfort from thee.

4. 'Be not always poring upon thy sins and spiritual wants;' but as with one eye thou lookest upon thy sins, with the other eye look up unto Jesus Christ: consider his perfect righteousness, and all-sufficient sacrifice, whereby he is able to save to the utmost from all their sins. The truth is, one special reason why so many christians walk so uncomfortably, are so full of fears and doubts concerning their spiritual estate and future happiness, is their too much poring upon their sins and spiritual wants, and seldom eying of Christ. It is true there is a fault mostly on the other hand; we ordinarily look too little, rather than too much, on our sins ; but yet must we not so pore upon them, as thereby be kept from looking up unto Christ: for such a sight of sin must needs be sinful.

38. *Q.* What are the things required on our part for the obtaining eternal life and salvation ?

A. The things required on our part for the obtaining eternal life and salvation, are faith in Christ, repentance unto life, with a conscionable use of God's ordinances.

39. *Q.* What is faith in Christ ?

A. Faith in Christ is a saving grace, whereby we receive Christ in all his offices, as our priest, prophet and king, and rest upon him alone for salvation.

Expl. In this answer faith is set forth,

1. By the *general nature* of it, *It is a saving grace.*
2. By the *object* of it, which is *Christ.*
3. By the *acts*, which are two;

1. 'A receiving of Christ,' which is amplified by the manner, how Christ is to be received; namely, 'In all his offices.'
2. 'A resting upon *him* alone for salvation.'

1. For the general nature of faith, it is expressed in these words, *Faith is a saving grace.*

II. The *object* of saving faith is here said to be Christ, who indeed is the most immediate and principal *object* thereof; it being the proper work of faith to apprehend and apply Christ and his merits: whereupon it is commonly called, *Faith in Christ.*

III. In the next place, followeth the 'acts of saving faith.'

The first whereof is, 'To receive Jesus Christ,' which is the same as to lay hold on Christ, or to embrace him: which words imply one and the same thing.

But *receiving Christ* is the very expression of the Holy Ghost, John i. 12. 'As many as receive him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe.' The latter clause of *believing* is added as an explication of the former clause of *receiving Christ*, to shew what is meant by *receiving Christ*; namely, *a believing on him:* which two are very fitly joined together. *Believing* is added to *receiving*, to shew what is meant by *receiving Christ:* and *receiving* is joined with *believing*, to shew what kind of faith it is whereby Christ becomes our's: it is such a faith whereby we accept of, and receive Christ, with the benefits of his death and passion.

This act of faith is amplified, 'by the manner how Christ is to be received, namely, 'In all his offices, as Priest, Prophet, and King:' and so he must be received by us, not only as our *Priest*, to satisfy for us, and make intercession for us; but likewise as our *Prophet*, to be taught and instructed by him; yea, and as our *King*, to be ruled and governed by him. We must be as willing to cast ourselves at the feet of Christ, *in subjection to him*; as into the arms of Christ, *for salvation from him.*

V. 'The second act of faith is, to rest upon Christ for salvation.' This act of faith, 'in resting upon Christ,' we find expressed in the scripture by sundry phrases; as by *trusting in God*, Job xiii. 15. and *trusting in Christ*, Eph. i. 12. By *relying on God*, 2 Chron. xvi. 8. As also *leaning on Christ*, Cant. viii. 5. All these phrases are *Synonymous*, expressing the same thing in divers words.

In the last place it followeth, 'our resting upon Christ *alone*, for salvation.' Not upon any other person or thing, either besides Christ, or together with Christ, but *upon him alone.*

Appl. 1. 'Mistake not the nature of faith:' Some take it to be nothing else but a believing, or confident persuasion, that they shall be saved by Christ; but this is not true faith: for first,

'There may be such a persuasion where there is no faith.' How many ignorant miserable souls are there, who are confident Christ died for them, and they shall be saved through him; who yet know not the Lord! Secondly, 'There may be true faith, where there wants this persuasion.' Many a poor believer, that receives and rests upon Christ, is yet full of fears that he shall be damned.

2. 'Rest not short of true saving faith.' Now, to help you to believe, observe these directions.

I. 'Consider the encouragements Christ hath given us to believe in him, and to come to him.

1. 'He came down from heaven to earth, on purpose that he might save those that come unto God by him.'

2. When Christ was upon earth, he rejected none who came unto him for the cure of their bodily distempers: Though the end of his *coming* was not so much to cure *men's bodies*, as their *souls*. How then can we imagine, that he will reject any, who come unto him for the salvation of their souls? Never did any sincerely go unto Christ, who found not acceptance from him; John vi. 'He that cometh unto me (saith Christ) I will in no wise cast out.'

3. 'It is the command of God, that we should believe in his Son Jesus Christ, 1 John iii. 23. This is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ.' Now the command of God should out-weigh and prevail against all other commands of Satan, or the carnal reasonings of our own hearts; it should swallow up all discouraging fears and doubts.

4. 'Christ several ways declares his willingness to receive all poor sinners, who will go unto him, and by faith cast themselves into his arms.'

First, 'By his many gracious invitations to all poor sinners, who are but sensible of their sins, and degree, to partake of the benefits of his redemption to come unto him;' as Mat. xi. 28. John iii. 37.

Secondly, 'By sending his ambassadors to intreat and beseech poor sinners to come in, and be reconciled to him; as 2 Cor. v. 20. We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us:' What an expression of incomprehensible free love is this!

5. 'The scripture holdeth forth mercy to the worst sinners:'

1. By affirming, 'That Jesus Christ came to save the chief of sinners;' 1 Tim. i. 15.

2. 'By recording 'The conversion of most heinous sinners;' as of Manasseh, Paul, Mary Magdalene, and of others; who tho' their sins were of a scarlet die, yet were they washed clean by the blood of Jesus Christ.

II. 'Give diligent attention unto the ministry of the word; which is the ordinary means ordained by God for the working of faith in our hearts; Rom. x. 17. *Faith cometh by hearing.*

III. 'Being convinced that there is no way of salvation but on-

ly by going out of ourselves unto Christ, by disclaiming all our own righteousness, and resting upon his perfect righteousness adventure thy soul upon Christ, cast thyself, into his arms,' saying with Job, chap. xiii. 15. 'Though ye slay me, yet I will put my trust in him;' which is as great a measure of faith, as many sincere Christians do here attain unto.

V. 'To these add prayer,' which is not only a special means, but that which sanctifieth all other means; making them effectual to the ends, for which we use them. Oh! therefore be not wanting to thyself therein, but ask and ask again, that whatsoever he deny thee, he would vouchsafe unto thee a true saving faith in Jesus Christ.

40. *Q.* What is true repentance?

A. True repentance is a saving grace, whereby a sinner turneth from his sins, and returns to God; with full purpose of heart, and sincere endeavour to walk in newness of life.

Expl. In this answer are contained,

I. 'The general nature of repentance:' It is a *saving grace.* It is said to be a *grace,* because it is a gift freely given of God, wrought in us by his holy Spirit. And it is a *saving grace,* because it tends to and ends in the salvation of souls.

II. The parts of repentance are two:

1. '*Aversion from sin.* 2. *Conversion to God.* Which are expressed by those phrases of *turning from sin,* and *returning to God.* And indeed, the formality of repentance consisteth in our turning from sin, and returning unto God, from whom we have gone astray.

III. In the next place, follow the manifestations, and real evidences of true repentance; which are two.

First, 'A full purpose and resolution of heart to obey the Lord and not to return to our sins.'

Secondly, 'A sincere endeavour both to turn from sin, and to walk in newness of life.' Those purposes are false and deceitful, which do not bring forth suitable practices; namely, a serious endeavour to execute and perform the holy decrees and resolutions of our souls. A sincere penitent is a resolved person, and by his holy endeavours bears witness to the sincerity of his resolutions.

Before I come to the application, for the fuller clearing this grace of repentance, I shall shew you the ordinary preparatories thereunto; which are four.

1. *Sense of sin.* 2. *Apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ.* 3. *Grief for sin.* 4. *Hatred of sin.*

1. 'Sense of sin.' The Lord in preparing the heart of a sinner for the great work of repentence, doth make him sensible of his sins, and his miserable condition by reason of them.

Secondly, 'Another preparatory to true repentance is grief for sin.' *Godly sorrow,* saith the apostle, *worketh repentance unto salvation, not to be repented of;* 2 Cor. vii. 10. *Godly sorrow* is, when

we grieve for our sins, not so much out of a servile fear of punishment, from which Christ hath freed us by his death; but because we have offended so good a God, so bountiful a Lord and Master.

This godly sorrow is not repentance, but works repentance, and makes way for it. As no woman is ordinarily delivered of a child without some throes; so, no man is ordinarily converted without some grief for his sins. Yet are not all true penitents grieved in a like measure; some have gentle fits, and others are more deeply affected with an apprehension of their sins; haply because they have been more gross and scandalous sinners. Thus Paul, having been a persecutor of the saints and people of God, was more deeply humbled than the rest of the apostles; Acts ix. 9.

Hence it is, that such who have had their education under pious parents or governors, and thereupon free from heinous sins, do not usually feel those bitter throes in their conversion as others have felt.

Let none therefore question the truth of their repentance, because they have not been so deeply humbled as some others: For it matters not how deeply thou hast been wounded, but how soundly thou art cured. The sufficiency of things is to be judged by the answerableness to their use and end. If thy sorrow for sin hath brought thee to God, it is sufficient to evidence itself to be true godly sorrow. If God hath dealt more tenderly and gently with thee than with others, thou hast no cause to complain, but to bless God for his kindness to thee.

And whereas some question the truth of their sorrow for sin for want of tears;

1. 'Let such know, that tears are no certain rule whereby to judge the truth of our grief; in regard there may be true grief where there are no tears: the heart may bleed, when the eye cannot weep; and there may be many tears, where the heart is not sensibly touched.

2. 'Some men's bodies are of so dry a constitution, that they are unapt to weep for any thing;' and then, no marvel that they cannot weep for sin.

But if thou canst weep for outward losses and crosses, and not for thy sin, thou hast cause to complain more of the hardness and corruption of thine heart, than of the constitution of thy body.

If this be thy case, then take this advice, when thou findest thine heart affected, and thine eyes dropping tears for some outward loss or cross, then take that time seriously to meditate of thy sins, and turn the stream of thy tears upon them; that so they may run in the right channel.

Appl. 1. Speedily get this grace of repentance; which that you may obtain,

1. 'Set up the duty of examination;' search into thine own heart, call to mind as many of thy sins as possibly thou canst; to-

gether with their aggravating circumstances. This direction the prophet David had left upon record, with a *probatum est*: 'I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy testimonies,' Psalm cxix. 59.

2. 'Frequently attend unto the ministry of the word,' being a special mean appointed by God to bring us to repentance.

3. 'Repentance being the gift of God, be earnest with him in prayer, that he would bestow it upon thee.' In thy prayers,

First, 'Make an humble confession of thy sins:' Bewail, as thine original corruption, so the manifold transgressions of thy life. And then, with the Publican, smite thy breast, and say, *Lord be merciful to me a sinner.* And beg of God, that he would work in thee that true godly sorrow, which worketh repentance never to be repented of. To that end, beseech him, so to smite that rocky heart of thine, that out of it may flow streams of unfeigned sorrow: that he would turn thine heart from the love of all sin, unto himself; that thou mayest give up thyself sincerely and entirely unto him, to serve and please him in holiness and righteousness all the days of thy life.

4. 'Seriously meditate as on the certainty of the day of judgment, so, on the uncertainty of the time of it.' Yea, make it thy business, by faith, often to realize that day unto thyself. I know not a more *powerful means* to awaken and stir up secure sinners speedily to turn from their sins unto God, than seriously to contemplate of that dreadful day, when a strict account must be given of all our thoughts, words, and actions.

Secondly, 'Let us not content ourselves with the first, or initial repentance,' as divines call it; 'but let us frequently renew our repentance.' For the better understanding of it, take notice of a *twofold repentance.*

1. 'The initial, or first repentance,' which was at our first conversion; when we first came to a sight and sense of our sins, and were savingly brought to God.

This initial repentance, which is the first saving change that is wrought upon us, being the same with conversion, must have (as hath been in part already hinted) these four things in it. There must be,

1. 'A change of our judgments.' A true penitent begins here; he is brought to a right judgment, he seriously judges it his best course to turn to the Lord.

2. 'A change of the counsels of the heart.' A penitent not only changes his counsellors, but he changes the *matters of his counsels.* He consults not with flesh and blood, nor are his counsels about carnal things. But, what must I do to be saved? How must I get into Christ? these and such like are the main consultations and enquiries of his soul.

3. 'A change of the purposes of the heart.' The penitent soul

comes to this resolve; well, through the grace of God, I will be the Lord's, I am determined that I will keep his statutes. No longer will I be a servant of sin, or of the world; henceforth I will be for God, for holiness and for heaven. This purpose and resolution is the first saving act in conversion (provided it be deep and fixed) this is the will's closing with God.

4. 'A change of the practice,' when the penitent doth actually join himself to the Lord, and walk in his holy ways. This last, the change of the practice, is, that which proves the change of the purpose to be sincere.

These four things, the change of the *judgment*, of the *counsels of the heart*, of the *purposes of the heart*, and of the *practices*, are all comprehended in *initial repentance*, and are every one of them to be found in every sincere convert. O let it be carefully considered, and make these things the matter of your self-examination; lest you be fatally mistaken in repentance, and judge yourselves to be converts, when you are nothing so; and so perish everlastingly, Luke xiii. 3. 'Except ye repent,' and thus repent, 'ye shall all perish.'

2. 'The renewed, or continued repentance,' is the continuation of the first in the whole course of our lives.

This renewed repentance is likewise two fold. It is either *ordinary* or *extraordinary*.

The ordinary renewed repentance, in the preparative parts; and effects of it, as before described, is that which we ought daily to exercise: since we daily renew our sins and transgressions against God, we must daily renew our repentance.

The extraordinary renewed repentance is that, which we ought to perform upon special occasions, as after we have grossly fallen, when under great afflictions, before the sacrament, on days of humiliation, &c.

41. *Q.* Which are the ordinances Christ hath appointed for the furthering our salvation?

A. The special ordinances Christ hath appointed for the furthering our salvation, are, the Word, Sacraments, and Prayer.

42. *Q.* How doth the word become effectual to our salvation?

A. The word becometh effectual to our salvation; as by bringing sinners to a sight and sense of their miserable condition, and turning them from their sins unto God; so by perfecting the work of grace begun in the saints.

Expl. For the explication of this answer; I shall clear four things.

I. In what manner the word is made effectual to salvation,

1. 'By reading of it.' 2. 'By the preaching of it.'

II. To whom the word, and the ministry of it is made effectual; namely, both to *sinners*, and to *saints*.

III. How the word is made effectual to the salvation of sinners.

1. 'By bringing them to a sight and sense of their miserable condition.'

2. 'By turning them from their sins unto God;'

IV. How the word is made effectual to saints; namely, 'By perfecting the work of grace begun in them.'

I. For the first, 'The word is made effectual to salvation, sometimes by the reading of it.' History tells us, that Junius was converted by reading the first chapter of St. John's gospel. And Augustine, by reading the 13th chapter of the epistle to the Romans. And very many others have found the reading of the scriptures effectual to their salvation. Whereupon our Saviour exhorteth, all 'to search the scriptures,' John v. 39.

II. 'The word is made effectual more especially by the preaching of it,' in that thereby it works more upon the affections, and also leaves a deeper impression on the mind of a man.

III. 'The ministry of the word is made effectual to sinners:'

1. 'By bringing them to a lively sight and deep sense of their sins, and their miserable condition by reason of them.'

2. 'By turning them from their sins unto God,' which cometh to pass, partly, 'by preaching the law;' and partly, 'by preaching the gospel.'

1. 'The law discovers unto sinners their manifold transgressions; shewing them both the nature and danger of them, and their miserable condition into which they are thereby plunged, and an utter impossibility to escape of themselves; whereby they receive the sentence of death in themselves.

2. 'Then cometh the gospel, that message of reconciliation, which discovers a remedy,' whereby poor sinners may be delivered out of the snares of the devil, and be freed from the curse of the law, and brought into favour with God, and accepted by him, by their closing with Jesus Christ, upon the terms of the gospel.

IV. 'As the ministry of the word is made effectual to sinners, by convincing and converting them, so to saints, by perfecting the work of grace begun in them;' Acts xx. 32. 'It is able to build them up, and to perfect the work of grace begun in them.'

Appl. 1. Seeing the ministry of the word is so many ways effectual to our spiritual advantage; the first use may be, 'To reprove a number of profane persons in these days, who with open mouth cry out against the ministry of the word, and the frequent preaching of it.' And that they may have some pretence for their profaneness, they cry out for more praying, and less preaching. But it cannot be for love to prayer, that they call for more praying, seeing they add, less preaching: for, if in truth they took delight in calling upon God, they could not also but take delight in hearing God speak to them.

2. 'Be constant in the use of God's ordinances, neglect no opportunity of enjoying them.' For aught thou knowest, that time

thou wilfully and needlessly absentest thyself from any of God's ordinances, might have been a time of mercy to thy soul, which thou hast lost; and mayest never meet with the like again.

43. *Q.* How may we profit by our reading and hearing the word?

A. We may profit by our reading and hearing the word; as, by preparing ourselves, so, by giving diligent attention thereunto; receiving it with faith and love, treasure it up in our hearts, and practising it in our lives.

Expl. In this answer, our profiting by the word, is affirmed to be furthered by these means.

1. By preparing ourselves thereunto.
2. By giving our diligent attention unto it.
3. By receiving it with faith and love.
4. By treasuring it up in our hearts.
5. By practising it in our lives.

I. 'By a due preparation thereunto.' That thou mayest be duly prepared;

1. 'Possess thine heart with an awe of God's majesty,' that thou mayest say as Jacob, Gen. xxviii. 17. 'How dreadful is this place! this is no other but the house of God.'

2. 'Have recourse unto God by prayer;' and that first, for the *minister*, 'that a door of utterance may be given unto him, that he may preach the word truly, sincerely, powerfully, and profitably. Secondly, For *thyself*, that God would give thee, not only attention to hearken, but likewise understanding to conceive, wisdom to apply, memory to retain, faith to believe, and grace to practise what thou shalt hear.

3. 'Go with an heart ready to receive and embrace every truth that God shall teach thee.'

4. 'As thou art going, seriously consider whither thou art going:' not to a market, but to the house of God, where God himself is present to behold thee, and where God himself speaketh by the mouth of the minister.

5. 'Lay aside all worldly cares and thoughts,' which may distract thy mind in hearing the word, and so choaking this heavenly seed, make it fruitless.

II. 'That the word may be heard with spiritual advantage, all diligent attention must be given thereunto;' so as not a word that is delivered should be carelessly lost.

Our attention hath three enemies which we must carefully avoid; and against which we must watch.

The first is, *Straying thoughts*, roving after worldly matter. The second is, *A wandering eye*, rolling up and down from one object to another. The third is, *A careless sleeping* in the time of public exercises.

Let sleepers know that the devil sleeps not; but is wakeful and

watchful to take their souls napping, and, if possible, to carry them to hell. It will be therefore our wisdom to strive against it by standing up, and rousing up ourselves: yea, to pray to God for help and strength against all drowsiness of body; and if we find ourselves apt to sleep after meals, it is better at such times to eat the less, or to sleep a little at home before we go to the public, which may be a good means to prevent our sleeping there.

III. 'The word must be received with faith;' believing and applying those things which we hear.

1. 'When as a truth it is believed.'

2. 'When it is applied as a truth that concerns thyself in particular.' As for instance, if the minister hath spoken against any sin, to which thy conscience crieth guilty, make application of it unto thyself; and say, The Lord this day called upon me to humble my soul for such a sin, and to resolve against it for the time to come; and, God's grace assisting me, so I will. In like manner, if the minister hath pressed any special duty that appertains unto thee, apply that duty unto thyself, and bring it home unto thine own soul, saying, The Lord hath this day called upon me by the voice of his minister, to be more careful in sanctifying the Lord's day; or to be more constant in secret prayer in my closet, or in private prayer with my family; and, God's grace assisting me, so I will. The truth is, in this application of sins and duties, consisteth the very life of hearing.

IV. 'The duties to be performed by us after reading or hearing, are chiefly two; that we lay it up in our hearts, and practsie it in our lives.'

James i. 22. 'Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves;' implying, that all our hearing of sermons, is but a deceiving our own souls, if we be not doers of them; if we practise not what we hear.

Appl. 'Seeing practice is made the end of hearing, far be it from any of us to flatter ourselves into a good opinion and conceit of our present condition, barely upon our frequent hearing of sermons.' It is good to be hearers of the word, because this is the means to bring us to be doers; but beware that thou satisfy not thyself with bare hearing. Hear that thou mayest do; but let not thine hearing serve thee instead of doing.

44. *Q.* How do the sacraments further our salvation?

A. The sacraments do further our salvation, through our receiving them by faith.

45. *Q.* What is a sacrament?

A. A sacrament is a divine ordinance, wherein by outward signs and rites, Christ and all his benefits are sealed up unto believers.

Appl. I. The general nature of a sacrament is set forth by this phrase, 'It is a divine ordinance,' being instituted by Christ.

II. The parts of a sacrament are two.

1. 'The outward signs, with their rights instituted by Christ.

2. 'The spiritual things signified by them.'

Both these must necessarily concur to make a sacrament: for without an outward sign, there is not a shew of a sacrament, and without the spiritual things signified, there can be nothing but a shew: but both joined together, make up the full matter of a sacrament.

Appl. 'Sacraments being holy ordinances, instituted by Christ, they ought to be used reverently and religiously; not for fashion, custom, or only for the laws of men, but in obedience to Christ and his institution.' He that is the institutor of sacraments, it is his authority that doth bind us, and must bring us to the use of them.

46. *Q.* How many Sacraments are there?

A. There are only two Sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper.

47. *Q.* What is Baptism?

A. Baptism is a Sacrament, wherein by water applied to the body, in the name of the *Father*, the *Son*, and the *Holy Ghost*, our ingrafting into Christ, and partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our engagement to be his faithful servants, are sealed up unto us.

Here Baptism is set forth,

1. By the general notion of it, *It is a Sacrament.*

2. By the outward sign and right used therein; the outward sign is *water*, the rite used therein, is *washing*.

3. By the form of words used in the administration of it, viz. 'To baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.'

4. By the things signified and sealed on God's part; which are two.

1. 'Our ingrafting into Christ.'

2. 'Our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace.'

5. By the thing sealed on our part; namely, 'Our engagement to be God's faithful servants.' Of these in their order.

I. 'Baptsim is a sacrament,' that is, it is a seal added to the covenant of grace, for the strengthening of our faith in the firm expectation of the good things promised therein.

II. 'The outward sign in baptism is water,' plain and common water, such as are in springs, brooks, rivers, wells, ponds, or such like places. Such water of old was used; Mat. iii. 6. John iii. 23.

1. By *water* in baptism, *Christ himself*, who is the substance and thing signified in every sacrament, is in the general set forth; but in particular, the *blood of Christ*.

2. 'The outward rite in baptism is washing, or applying of wa-

ter to the body,' which may be done divers ways; as, by dipping the person baptized in the water, or by pouring or sprinkling water on the face. Dipping of the person into the water is not necessary; but baptism is rightly administered by pouring or sprinkling water upon the person.

Though in hot countries it might be the ancient custom of baptizing, to dip the body into the water; yet now, especially in these cold countries, the rite of sprinkling is generally used; yea, sprinkling doth best accord with that sprinkling of water under the law, whereby such as were unclean were cleansed, Numb. xix. 13, 18, and with the mystical manner of cleansing us from sin, often mentioned in Scripture under this metaphor of *sprinkling*, Ezek. xxxvi. 25. Heb. ix. 13.

This rite of 'washing the party baptized with water,' doth signify the washing and cleansing of the soul from the guilt and filth of sin by the blood of Christ, applied by the Spirit of God.

III. The form of words to be used in the administration of baptism is, 'In the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.' This form is to express, that it hath, ever since the first institution of it, been by orthodox Christians retained in the administration of baptism.

The things *signified* and *sealed* on God's part in *baptism*, are,

1. 'Our ingrafting into Christ.'

2. 'Our partaking of the benefits of the covenant of grace.'

1. 'By the sacrament of baptism we are ingrafted into Christ,' and made *members of his body;* that is, *visibly* by the *outward administration*, and *spiritually* by *faith:* as we are outwardly *initiated* and *admitted* by the congregation as *members* of the *visible church;* so by the *work of the Spirit*, we are *really* and *spiritually* joined to the Lord.

It doth seal unto us our 'ingrafting into Christ.' As *circumcision* was, so 'baptism is a seal of the righteousness of faith,' and of the *promises of God* touching *justification*, *remission*, *regeneration*, *adoption*, and *salvation*. We find the scripture in several places attributeth these *spiritual blessings* to the *ordinance of baptism*, as Acts ii. 38. Tit. iii. 5. But it is observed by learned expositors, that in those and such like places, the scripture speaketh of *baptism*, as it comprehendeth both the baptism of water, and the baptism of the Spirit.

V. 'Baptism doth seal unto us the blessings which God hath promised in the covenant of grace; and also seal our engagement unto God, to be his faithful servants.' As God in and by the *ordinance of baptism*, doth strengthen our *faith*, by sealing to his part of the *covenant*, thereby giving us assurance of his faithfulness therein; so the parties *baptized* do *seal* and *engage* the duties to be performed on their part: the sum whereof is, 'That they will be the Lord's, and his only: that is, They will renounce the devil

and all his works, the vain pomps and glory of the world, the sinful lusts of the flesh; and devote and consecrate themselves, souls and bodies to him, and his service, to serve him only in holiness and righteousness all the days of their lives.'

Appl. Seeing that by *baptism*, we are incorporated into *God's family*, how doth it concern us to labour to walk worthy of this *great privilege*, by leading an 'holy life and conversation before so holy a God.' The whole *life* of a *Christian* should be the *paying* of his *baptismal vow*, by resisting and casting off all *iniquity*, and walking 'worthy of the Lord unto all well-pleasing.' Art thou *baptized?* What manner of person oughtest thou to be, 'in all holy conversation and godliness?' This thou hast vowed to be, and thus it becomes every one of *God's family*.

48. *Q.* Who are to be baptized?

A. They are to be baptized, who in charity may be thought to be within the covenant.

Expl. Baptism being a seal of *God's covenant*, all that have a *right* to the *one*, have a *right* unto the *other;* and none have a *right* to one, which have not a *right* to the other: so that baptism is not to be administered to any, who are strangers to the *covenant of grace*, as are all such who are out of the visible church, till they profess their faith in Christ.

Baptism therefore is to be administered 'to such as profess their faith in Christ, and to their children.'

This, though denied by some, yet it is very evident: for, besides the charge given to the apostles: *To baptize all nations;* and their practice, who *baptized whole households;* of both which *infants* make up a considerable part: besides this, let these arguments be weighed.

1. 'The first argument may be taken from the extent of God's covenant, which reaches even to the seed of believers.' For, when God established his *covenant* betwixt himself and Abraham, he said, 'I will establish my covenant between me and thee, and thy seed after thee in their generation,' Gen. xvii. 7. and the apostle Peter said to them that professed the faith, Acts ii. 39. *The promise is to you and to your children.*' In regard of this extent of God's covenant, it is, that the apostle, in 1 Cor. vii. 14. saith of children, either of whose parents *was a believer*, though the other *were an infidel, they are holy.* Of which phrase, one of these three things must be meant; either,

1. 'They are legitimate, and not bastards:' but this cannot be meant; for, then it would follow, that when both the parents are infidels, their children are bastards; which is false.

Or, 2*dly*, 'The meaning must be, that they are savingly justified, and truly gracious;' and this none will affirm.

Or, 3*dly*, 'The meaning is, that they are federally holy:' that is, They are to be reputed and reckoned God's covenant people.

And, since it cannot be understood in either of the former senses, therefore it must be understood of this last, of a federal or covenant-holiness. And, if the covenant belong to them, then also the seal of the covenant, namely, *baptism*. On this ground the children of the Israelites were circumcised, namely, *their covenant-interest*. Now to deny the evidence of God's favour to *children of Christians*, which was granted to the Israelites' children, is to lessen God's grace and favour since the exhibition of Christ.

2dly, 'The manifestation of Christ's good will to children brought in arms to him, whom he blessed, and his declaration of their right to the kingdom of heaven, gives good warrant to afford unto them the seal of God's favour;' Mat. xix. 14. As for the particular way of applying the thing signified in *baptism* to infants, it must be left to the inward and unrevealed work of the Spirit, which is instead of actual faith wrought by the same Spirit in those that are of age: warrantably therefore do we continue the ancient custom of baptizing children from the apostles' times.

Appl. 1. 'Seeing the infants of such as are members of the visible church, have a right to the ordinance of baptism, then how doth it concern parents to take care that their children may partake thereof!' And the rather, because they being conceived in sin, and brought forth in iniquity, are thereby brought to the bath of *Christ's blood*, which alone can cleanse their polluted souls from the filthy spots of sin.

And in regard, it is an holy *ordinance*, instituted by Christ for their spiritual good, it ought to be done after a right manner.

1. 'In obedience to the command of God:' And not merely, because of the laws of men, or for fashion and custom's sake. They who desire this ordinance out of such low respects can expect little benefit or comfort from it.

2. 'With all convenient speed:' Careless delaying the same will argue a slighting, if not a contemning thereof, which may prove very dangerous.

3. 'With all holy reverence:' Being a part of God's worship instituted and appointed by him.

4. 'With faith in his gracious promise;' that he will be our God, and the God of our seed.

5. 'With earnest fervent prayer unto God for a blessing on his own ordinance:' That he would join the inward baptism of his Spirit with the outward baptism of water, that he would make that ordinance to the infant a seal of all the promises of the covenant of grace.

6. 'With thanksgiving unto God:' As for Christ the chiefest of all mercies: so for the covenant of grace made with us, and sealed unto us in and through him; and that he is pleased to receive not only us, but our posterity after us thereunto, that both we and they should be wrapped up in a covenant of grace and mercy.

II. 'This mercy of God vouchsafed to our children, in bringing them into the covenant of grace, doth put a strong obligation upon parents to instruct them in the mysteries of the covenant:' As in the knowledge of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ: and to bring them up in the fear of the Lord, which is the best thing you can do for them, and the greatest evidence of your true love to them, and care of them.

III. 'Baptism being a solemn ordinance instituted by Christ for gracious ends, it must needs be the duty of every one to continue together,' and not to depart from the congregation without some extraordinary occasion, till the sacrament be ended.

IV. 'The last use shall be for direction to such as are baptized and come to years of discretion, how to make a practical improvement of their baptism.

1. Oft call to mind your own baptismal vow, the covenant which was then made on your behalf; namely, to forsake the Devil and all his works, the vain pomp and glory of the world, with the sinful lusts of the flesh, and to devote yourselves unto God and his service.

2. 'Renew thy baptismal vow and covenant, by engaging thyself in an express and solemn covenant unto God, to abandon thy sins, and to give up thyself unto God to be his faithful servant.' Though thou hast been baptized and thereby visibly entered into covenant with God, yet this, however it be obligatory upon thee, was thy parents and the ministers dedication of thee; thou must likewise, when thou comest to understanding, dedicate thyself to the Lord. Though baptism once administered be not to be repeated, yet the baptismal covenant ought to be renewed.

Consider therefore thy baptismal covenant, and examine thine own heart, whether thou art resolved to stand to that covenant; whether thou find a willingness in thyself to renounce the service of the devil, the world, and the flesh, and to resign up thyself to God and his service: and if this be thy mind in earnest, then renew thy covenant with God.

And whereas there is a two fold covenanting with God,

1. 'One inward in the soul;' which consisteth in a sincere closing with God, and hearty devoting ourselves to him and his service.

2. 'The other outward, with the tongue and hand:' When having written down thy covenant, thou dost with all seriousness and sincerity on thy bended knees, read it as in the presence of God, and then subscribe thy name thereunto. This latter way of express covenanting, I would commend unto you.

For your help therein you may make use of that form of words, together with several directions, how this duty ought to be performed, set down in my *Treatise of Regeneration*, called, (*A word to Sinners, and a word to Saints.*) Chap. XII. And what is thus

privately done between God and ourselves, we do solemnly and publicly engage ourselves to, at confirmation.

3dly. Another direction for the improvement of your *baptism*, is, 'Seriously to consider how you have kept your vow and covenant then made?' Whether you have resisted the devil and his temptations, by praying and striving against them: Whether you have mortified your sinful lusts, so that they are now in some measure weakened and subdued.

4thly, 'Wherein you have fallen short, confess unto God, and bewail your manifold breaches and fallings;' And then, having begged the pardon of them, resolve to be more watchful over yourselves for the time to come; and strive with the utmost you can, to live more suitably and answerably to your vows and promises. Thus may we improve our baptism to many spiritual advantages.

Hitherto of the first sacrament which is *baptism;*

The other, which is the *Lord's supper*, followeth.

49. *Q.* What is the Lord's supper?

A. The Lord's supper is a sacrament of our spiritual nourishment, wherein by receiving bread and wine according to Christ's institution, the believing communicants do feed upon Christ by faith, and thereby do grow up in grace.

Ex. In this description the nature of the Lord's supper is set forth.

I. First, generally in this phrase, 'A sacrament of our spiritual nourishment:' It is so called,

1. To distinguish it from *baptism*, which is a 'sacrament of our REGENERATION, or NEW-BIRTH,' whereas the Lord's supper is a 'sacrament of our spiritual nourishment.'

2. To shew the special benefit which is sealed thereby; namely, 'A spiritual nourishment or growth in Christ:'

II. In the Lord's supper there is *more particularly* to be considered, *The outward signs*, which are *bread and wine;* 'And the spiritual things signified by them, namely, the body and blood of Christ:' For Christ at the institution of this sacrament, holding bread in his hand, said; *This is my body:* and taking the cup, he said; *This is my blood which is shed for many;* Mat. xxvi. 26, 27. That is mystically and sacramentally, by way of representation and obsignation; as if he had said, This bread and wine representeth, and sealeth my body and blood.

The bread in the Lord's supper is not transubstantiated and turned into the real body of *Christ*, or the wine into the blood of *Christ*, as the *papists* hold: This opinion of theirs is a gross absurdity, and evidently against scripture, principles of philosophy, common sense, and the very nature of a sacrament.

1. *Scripture* saith, 'That the heavens must receive Christ until the times of restitution of all things,' Acts iii. 21.

2. *Philosophy* saith, That a true body hath dimensions, and

can be but in one place at a time; therefore *Christ's* body cannot be in many places.

3. *Common sense* saith, That it is still bread and wine, as is undeniably evident to our sight, taste, smell and touch: Our senses cannot be deceived in their proper objects, otherwise there could be nothing certain to us in the world.

4. 'It is against the nature of a sacrament:' A sacrament consisteth of a sign and a thing signified. Now if the bread be no longer bread, but the body of *Christ;* if the wine be no longer wine, but the blood of *Christ;* where is the sign? And if there be no sign, where is the sacrament? It can be no sacrament, which hath no sign; and bread and wine can be no signs, if they by this transubstantiation become the things signified.

IV. 'The next thing to be considered in the Lord's supper, are the outward rites and actions;' Some whereof are performed by the *minister*, and some by the *people.*

1. The *minister* taketh the bread into his hand, and breaketh it, which lively setteth forth 'the sufferings which Christ endured for us. St. Paul in 1 Cor. xi. 20. Thus bringeth in Christ himself applying that right. 'This is my body which is broken for you.'

2. The *minister* giveth the *bread* and *wine* to the *communicant;* whereby is set forth, 'God giving his son to every believing communicant. Now, in the *sacrament* God doth in particular make an offer and tender of Christ to every *communicant:* Yea, he doth, as it were, put him into his hand with his own hands. What a ground of confidence is this? What greater or surer ground can we have of *receiving Christ*, than this? Doth not God hereby speak to us, as it were by name, and say; 'Lo, John, I give my Son to thee, Lo, Peter, I give my Son to thee.'

2. The *minister* in giving the *bread* and the *cup*, saith; *Take, eat, drink;* whereby is meant, 'God's will for applying Christ unto ourselves.' For he doth not only in a dumb shew make offer of Christ, but by his *minister* speaks unto us, and saith; 'I will and require you to take my Son, to apply him to yourselves, to make him your own that so you may live by him.' What can we more expect on God's part to move us to receive his Son?

The rites on the *people's* part, are, 'To take the bread and the cup, and to eat the bread and drink the wine:' By which is set forth, 'their receiving Christ's body and blood,' which is a spiritual applying of Christ made man, and made a sacrifice for sin, and that by faith.

V. 'How we are made partakers of the body and blood of Christ;' this is set down, 'by feeding on Christ by faith.' Now then we feed on Christ by faith, when we do apply him, with all his benefits, unto our own soul's comfort.

V. 'The special end of our partaking of this ordinance is, our spiritual nourishment, and growth in grace.' The sacrament of

the Lord's supper is not the *seed of life* by which we are begotten, but the *food of life*, by which we are nourished.

Appl. Seeing the Lord's supper is an ordinance of Christ's appointment, it cannot be a matter arbitrary, left to our own wills, whether we will use it, or no; but a necessary duty, whereunto we are bound by our allegiance and obedience unto Christ; who hath ordained it as a part of his worship, for a standing memorial of his great love in dying for us, and a seal of his gracious covenant; certainly they shew themselves contemners of God's worship, and despisers of his covenant, who either wilfully refuse, or carelessly neglect to partake thereof, when they are invited thereunto, and have an opportunity of receiving it.

50. *Q.* What is the duty of every communicant before he come to the Lord's supper?

A. The duty of every communicant is, to examine himself of his knowledge, faith, love, repentance, and new obedience.

Expl. This answer in general containeth the great duty of those, who desire to partake worthily of the *Lord's supper;* namely, *examination;* which duty is set forth by an enumeration of the special graces, whereof we must examine ourselves before our partaking of the *Lord's supper;* as,

1. Of our *knowledge*. 2. Of our *faith*. 3. Of our *repentance*. 4. Of our *love*. 5. Of our new *obedience*.

This grand duty of *examination*, is prescribed by the apostle; 1 Cor. xi. 28. 'Let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup.' More particularly,

I. 'Of our knowledge to discern the Lord's body,' as it is represented and set forth unto us under the elements of *bread* and *wine:* for, 'whosoever discerneth not the Lord's body, eats and drinks unworthily; yea, he eateth and drinketh judgment, if not damnation, *to himself;*' 1 Cor. xi. 29. Therefore it nearly concerneth us to examine ourselves concerning *our knowledge*, as of the *fundamental principles of religion;* so more particularly of the *doctrine of the sacrament:* As, that it was ordained by Christ himself, and that as a standing memorial of his great love in offering up his life a sacrifice for our sins; and as a seal of the covenant of grace. That the outward signs in the Lord's supper are bread and wine; bread broken, and wine poured out; and that by them Christ's body and blood, with all his bitter sufferings for our redemption, are set out. That every believing communicant doth by faith truly receive Christ, with all the benefits of his death and passion. The knowledge of these things is requisite, because without it we cannot discern the Lord's body.

II. 'We must examine ourselves of our faith;' for faith is the hand, mouth, and stomach of the soul, whereby the body and blood of Christ is received, eaten and drunken. And this shews, that it is necessary, that faith be added to knowledge; for, though

a man through his knowledge be able to discern Christ's body and blood under the outward signs, yet if thereupon he be not brought to believe on Christ, and to apply him aright to his own soul, his knowledge can do him no good at all; no more than if a hungry man should see plenty of dainty cheer before him, but not touch, eat, or drink any part of it.

III. 'We must examine ourselves of our repentance.' For no man can come worthily to the sacrament of the Lord's supper without true and unfeigned repentance, unless he have deeply bewailed and cast off all known sins, and fully resolved never to return to them again. And know assuredly, that according to the measure of our repentance will our benefit be by the sacrament. The more pains we take with ourselves in humbling ourselves for our sins, the greater comfort may we expect from the ordinance; and the less pains, the less comfort.

IV. 'We must examine ourselves of our *love*, both of God, and of our *neighbour*.'

1. 'Of our love of God,' which is required in all the holy services we perform to God, but especially in the Lord's supper; wherein his divine love in giving his Son for our redemption, is so gloriously manifested, and so graciously sealed to us.

2. 'Of our love of our neighbour,' which is necessarily required of every worthy communicant. In Mat. v. 23. our Saviour declareth, how God maketh no reckoning of the most 'religious actions, where true brotherly affections are wanting;' and therefore requireth *brotherly love*, and reconcilement first to be endeavoured, before our *sacrifice* be presented to God.

V. 'We must examine ourselves of our new obedience, without which our receiving will prove vain and hypocritical.' As the Lord's supper is God's seal to the 'covenant of grace,' assuring us of his willingness to perform the *covenant* on his part; so, it is a bond and obligation on our part, as was hinted before, whereby we solemnly engage ourselves to yield faithful service, and sincere obedience unto God: and so oft as we partake of that ordinance, so oft we ought to renew our obligation to new obedience, and to examine ourselves concerning the truth and sincerity of our obedience hitherto.

51. *Q.* What is the danger of receiving unworthily?

A. The unworthy receiver eateth and drinketh judgment to himself.

So the apostle tells us, 1 Cor. xi. 29. 'He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself:' as our translation rendereth it. But the word *krima* in the Greek, sometimes signifieth *eternal damnation*, and sometimes *temporal judgment*, or chastisement; and in that place it may be taken in both senses, and may imply both, in respect of the divers persons upon whom it is executed.

If you ask, how unworthy receivers eat and drink their own judgment or damnation? I answer; first, 'Unworthy receiving doth dispose men for judgment;' it ripens and prepares them for *wrath*. Those that grow not *better*, grow *worse* by the *sacrament*, making way for the devil to enter into them, as he did into Judas after his receiving the sop; who hath the greater advantage against them, to fill them with all unrighteousness, and thereby to fit them for destruction.

2. 'Unworthy receiving doth expose men to judgment,' and that both *temporal* and *eternal*: even believers, receiving unworthily, do thereby merit the *wrath* of God, and without deep *repentance*, cannot escape, and may fall into *temporal judgments*, notwithstanding their *repentance*. But the *ungodly* and *impenitent* receivers, it binds up under a curse, and seals them to destruction. It hardens them against *repentance*, and if they *repent* not, it binds them over to *eternal vengeance*. O tremble and fear, tremble and prepare for this *sacred ordinance*: you that hope you are believers, be careful and jealous of yourselves in your preparations, see that you be serious in them; you know not how dear it may cost you, if you come not duly prepared.

Appl. 1. In regard of the danger of *unworthy receiving*; after your *due preparation*, be exhorted in order to your *right participation*.

1. To approach unto the table with all holy reverence, carrying yourselves as in the sight and presence of the great God, who observeth the *inward thoughts* of our *heart*, as well as the *outward actions* of our *bodies*.

2. And in the time of receiving, let us make use of our outward senses, for the stirring up our spiritual affections; often fastening our eyes upon the visible *signs* and *rites*, and thereby raising our *meditations* of the *spiritual things* signified thereby. When we see the *minister* breaking the bread, and pouring out the wine, then by *faith* let us behold Christ *wounded*, *bleeding* and *crucified* before our eyes, thereby satisfying God's justice for our sins. Oh how should the consideration of these things affect our hearts with *bitter grief* and *sorrow* for our sins, as the cause of Christ's sufferings; and likewise raise up our hearts to an holy admiration of the love of God in giving his Son, and of the love of Christ in dying for us! and then raise and enlarge our hearts in flames of love and praise.

3. 'Let us solemnly renew our covenant with God.' Let God's giving us the bread and wine, be looked upon by us, as his setting his seal afresh to his covenant, and giving it sealed into our hands: and let our receiving, our eating and drinking, be our setting our own seal to our covenant with God. In the very act of receiving, lift up your hearts thus to the Lord; 'Lord, let thy giving me these tokens of thy covenant, be a sign betwixt thee and me, that thou wilt be my God, and wilt perform unto me all the gracious

words of thy covenant: and let my receiving them, be a sign betwixt me and thee, that I do unfeignedly give up myself to thee as thy covenant-servant; and that I will, through thy grace, endeavour to be faithful and stedfast in the covenant of my God.'

4. 'Having thus renewed your covenant, resolve in the strength of the Lord, to be faithful in keeping your covenant.'

A large explication of these things you may find in my *Christian Directions how to walk with God*, chap. xii.

Having treated largely of the Word and Sacraments: I come now to treat of Prayer; which is the means on our part to be performed, for the obtaining a blessing on the Word and Sacrament.

52. *Q.* What is Prayer?

A. Prayer is a right opening of the desire of the heart to God in the name of Jesus Christ.

Expl. In this answer is set forth.

I. 'The general nature of prayer,' which is, 'an opening or making known of the desires of your hearts.' Desire is the soul of prayer, and there must not only be habitual desires, but they must be actuated. Praying is the pouring out our souls in actual desires after the good things we want, Isa. xxvi. 9. Yet is not the voice altogether excluded, which is necessary in public prayer in the church; and in private, in and with the family; and may be used in secret, for the stirring up our devotions, and keeping our minds from wandering thoughts, provided it be not done with an intention to be heard and taken notice of by others, which will argue gross hypocrisy.

II. 'The object of our prayers,' which is God; it is he, and he alone, that knoweth our hearts, that is present in all places to hear the prayers of his people: that is omnipotent, able to supply all their wants, to answer all their desires; whereupon this title, 'To be the hearer of prayers,' is given only to God; as Ps. lxv. 2. 'O thou that hearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come.' Neither saint nor angel, nor any creature are the objects of prayer but God alone. Our prayers are ordinarily to be directed to God the Father, Son and Holy Ghost; yet may we direct them expressly to any one of the Three Persons, but not excluding, but including all.

III. 'Our prayers must be offered up in the name of Christ, No man cometh to the Father, but by me,' saith our Saviour, John xiv. 6. and the apostle, Eph. ii. 18. 'Through him we have access unto the Father:' and John xvi. 23. 'Whatsoever ye shall ask the Father in my name, he will give it you,' saith Christ. To offer up our prayers in the name of Christ, is not customarily to say these words; *Through Jesus Christ our Lord:* but to pray in dependence upon Christ, for whose worthiness alone we beg and hope to be heard.

Appl. The only use I shall make of this duty of prayer, is, 'to stir you up to a constant and conscionable performance of it.'

1. 'Be constant therein,' and that in all the kinds of prayer, both public, private and secret.

First, 'Diligently attend to the seasons allotted to public prayers in the public congregation,' for such are usually most powerful and effectual. If one Jacob may wrestle with God in prayer, and prevail; how much more may many Jacobs meet together in one place? O what may not a multitude of holy, humble and fervent souls obtain from the Lord? though God is present in all places, yet more especially in the public assemblies, where two or three, or more are gathered together to worship him; see Acts iv. 31.

Secondly, 'Private prayers ought daily to be performed by masters of families in their houses, which, through God's blessing, will prove a special means to season their families with the true fear of God. As prayerless families are for the most part destitute of the fear of God; so in praying families, the hearts of many are seasoned with the fear of God.

Thirdly, 'Both masters and servants, yea, every one of understanding, ought daily to offer up a morning and an evening sacrifice of prayer and praise unto God in secret, according to the direction of our Saviour,' Mat. vi. 6. 'When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and pray unto thy Father which seeth in secret, and thy Father which seeth in secret, will reward thee openly.' There you may freely open your hearts into God's bosom, and desire his direction, assistance and blessing in such cases as are not fit to be mentioned before others: and there God usually unbosoms himself unto his children. This duty is the certain practice of every sincere convert. So soon as ever Paul was converted, he got alone, and betook himself to prayer, Acts ix. 11. *Behold he prayeth.* And it may well be questioned, whether any grown man or woman can be saved, who doth not call upon the Lord, 'For though he be rich in mercy, yet it is to them who call upon him,' Rom. x. 12.

II. 'As we must be constant in the duty of prayer, so conscionable in the right manner of performing it.' To this end we ought,

1. 'To pray in faith,' believing in Christ, for his obtaining the acceptance, and granting our *requests* through his *merits* and *mediation*, and accordingly trusting upon the Lord for a *gracious answer* through him.

2. 'Yet with an humble submission to the will of God,' especially as to *temporal mercies*, and likewise for *spiritual blessings* in respect of their degrees: and certainly, the surest way to have our own will, is to make God's will ours.

3. 'To pray with fervency, pouring forth our desires with sighs and groanings.' It is the fervent prayer only that is effectual; James v. 16. I know, we cannot always have a like fervency, but

yet we must always strive against deadness of heart, and dulness of spirit, and stir up ourselves to the duty, which will be a good token of God's accepting our prayers, and granting our requests.

4. 'To pray with humility,' as with an humble acknowledgment of our *unworthiness* to appear before God, and to receive any *good thing* from him: so, with a sense of the manifold *weaknesses* and *infirmities*, which accompany all our religious *exercises*. The high God, as he dwells in *humble hearts* so is he delighted *in our humble approaches to him*. Christians, as ever you would have *evidence* that you are Christians indeed; as ever you would *maintain* and *improve* that christianity you have, be conscientious and constant in this *duty of prayer*: all your religion is like to rise and fall, according to your rising or falling in this *duty of prayer*; and in particular that of secret prayer. If either you neglect it, or now and then when you are at leisure, must suffice you: or else, if you perform it cursorily and slightly, and do not strive with God, and cry mightily to the warning and awakening your own hearts, your religion is never like to come to any thing. Those that do but trifle in prayer, will certainly be but triflers in their whole course. Would you know that your religion be religion indeed; then see to it, that your praying be praying indeed; and in good earnest.

Hitherto of the 'renewed estate of the faithful in this life.' It remaineth to shew, as their estate at death, so after death.

53. *Q.* What is the estate of the faithful at their death.

A. The souls of the faithful go forthwith to heaven, and their bodies sleep in their graves, as in their beds of rest.

Expl. In this answer is set forth the state both of the souls and bodies of believers at their death.

I. 'For their souls, they go forthwith to heaven:' that is, So soon as ever a believer dies, his soul passeth immediately into glory; which is most evident to those that will consider the following scriptures; Luke xvi. 23. Luke xxiii. 43. 2 Cor. v. 8. Phil. iii. 23.

II. 'For their bodies, they shall sleep in their graves, as in beds of rest.'

Appl. 'Learn hence the reasons why many sinners, though they will not change lives with the saints, yet would they be glad to change deaths with them;' and are of Baalam's mind, exprest, Numb. xxiii. 10. 'Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like unto his.' This is a vain desire; he that will not live the life of the righteous, shall never die their death. If thou wilt have one, thou must take both: thou must live a righteous life, or thou art never like to die the righteous man's death; but yet this is the desire of the worst.

54. *Q.* What is the state of the faithful after death?

A. The bodies of the faithful shall be raised out of the grave

in glory, and at the general judgment owned by Christ, received into his favour, and fully enjoy God for ever.

Expl. Here four things are contained.

I. 'That there shall be a resurrection of the body:' the saints shall be raised out of their graves unto eternal life and happiness, John v. 28, 29. 'The hour is coming in which all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of Christ, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil unto the resurrection of damnation.'

II. 'The bodies of believers shall be raised up in glory.' Their glory is set forth by the Apostle in the general phrase, 'They shall be like the glorious body of Christ,' Phil. ii. 21. But more particularly, 1 Cor. xv. 42. 'It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption, it is sown in dishonour, it is raised in glory: it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body.'

III. 'There shall be a general judgment, when believers shall be owned by Christ, acquitted from all their sins, and their integrity and sincerity shall be made known to all.'

IV. 'After the resurrection, believers shall be blessed in the full enjoyment of God for ever.' The full enjoyment of God notes,

1. 'Their dwelling in his presence.'

2. 'Their dwelling in his love, loving and being beloved.'

3. 'Their beatifical vision,' or seeing the glorious God face to face, together with those immediate fruits of the 'blessed vision, fulness of satisfaction,' Psalm xvii. 15. and fulness of glorious and ravishing joy, Psalm xvi. 11. This is the blessedness of believers, and in this blessedness shall they abide to all eternity, where shall be 'everlasting praises, adoring, and admiring, Hallelujah to him that sits on the throne, and to the Lamb for ever.' Amen.

Appl. 1. 'Here is a word to unbelievers:' What is now the chief desire of your souls? Are you for everlasting glory, or for the pleasure of sin for a season? Are you for heaven, or for earth? methinks, some of you at least, should say, Away with all the pomps and vanities of the world, with the sinful lusts of the flesh, we will no longer be the devil's slaves, but servants of Jesus Christ; he shall be, as our Priest and Saviour, so our Lord and King. If this be the desire of your souls, then bid farewell to all your sinful pleasures and vain companions, and become the disciples of Christ, and he will lead you to his holy hill, and bring you into heaven.

2. 'A word to believers,' you that are escaped out of Egypt, and are in the wilderness in your journey towards Canaan, get you up to the top of Pisgah, and view the glory of that blessed country, whither you are bound. Is your treasure in heaven? there let your heart be also. Is your heart in heaven? there let your eye be also. Be looking daily into that glory which is with-

in the vail. Live in the daily and affectionate contemplation of the blessedness to come. A sight of your home will encourage you on your journey towards it. A sight of your rest will quicken you on in your labours, and comfort you under your greatest sufferings.

Having explained the chief principles of our Christian Religion; I shall close up this *Practical Catechism*, with a brief explication of the *Commandments* and *Lord's Prayer*.

55. *Q.* How many commandments are there?

A. There are ten commandments, which contain the sum of the moral law.

Expl. The *moral law* is a standing and abiding rule, by which all nations are to be governed, and that in all ages to the end of the world: and that it is that law which God gave at first unto man for the rule of his obedience.

God gave unto Adam as he was a public person, and stock of mankind, both a particular precept, 'of not eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge of good and evil,' for the trial of his obedience: as also, a law of *universal obedience* written in his heart, which by his fall was much obliterated and defaced: yet, all mankind have some fragments of it remaining in their hearts; such as make the very Gentiles, who have not the written law, inexcusable for their transgressions; as Rom. ii. 14, 15.

The law engraven in Adam's heart, being obliterated by his fall, was revived and promulgated by God to the people of Israel in Mount Sinai, through the ministry of Moses, which was the same for substance written in Adam's heart.

56. *Q.* What is the general sum of both the tables of the law?

A. The general sum of the first table is this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. And the general sum of the second table of the law, is, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

57. *Q.* In what words is the preface to the ten commmandments set down?

A. In these, 'I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.'

Expl. In the preface to the ten commandments, there are three reasons given, why we should keep and observe them.

1. 'Because God is the LORD,' therefore absolute and sincere obedience ought to be given to his commandments.

2. 'Because he is their God in covenant,' implied in these words, 'THY God; I am the Lord thy God,' not by common creation, or providential conversation only; for so he is to the wicked; but by special covenant made formerly with their fathers: wherein he promised them many singular mercies and blessings.

3. 'Because he was their Redeemer,' who brought them out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage; which put

a strong obligation upon them to yield cheerful obedience to their Deliverer.

Though these forementioned reasons were proper to the Jews, yet, do they likewise concern us Christians, and are strong arguments to engage us to the keeping God's commandments: For,

1. God is our Lord likewise, from whom we have received our being and well-being.

2. He is a God in covenant with us, as well as with Israel of old.

3. As he delivered the people of Israel out of their Egyptian bondage, so hath he delivered us from our spiritual bondage under sin, Satan, and the world. And therefore we are bound to take him for our God alone, to be his faithful servants, and to keep his commandments.

58. *Q.* Which is the first commandment?

A. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Expl. In this commandment, there are three things required, And three things forbidden.

The things required are,

1. That we take Jehovah to be the only true God, and our God: and thereupon give up ourselves to him to be his faithful people.

2. That we worship him as the only true God.

3. That we glorify him as the only true God, and our God; as by speaking good of the Lord, so by living to his glory; ordering our conversation aright.

The things forbidden are,

1. *Atheism*, which is denying the true God.

2. *Profaneness*, in not worshipping and glorifying him as men ought to do.

3. *Idolatry*, which is, when we give that worship to any other, which is due to God alone.

Finding this Practical Catechism to increase under my hand much beyond my first intention; I shall content myself with shewing the duties required, and the sins forbidden in every commandment, without making any distinct application.

59. *Q.* Which is the second commandment?

A. Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing; that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor worship them: for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me, and shewing mercy unto thousands of them that love me, and keep my commandments.

Expl. As the former commandment directed us to the true and proper object of divine worship; so this directeth us to the right way and manner of worshipping the true God; which is set down,

I. *Generally*, 'That God must be worshipped according to his own appointment in his word.'

II. *More particularly*, 'God must be worshipped in and by his own ordinances, which he hath instituted in his word;' as reading the Scriptures, Deut. xvii. 18. Preaching and hearing the word of God, 2. Tim. iv. 2. As also, praying unto God, singing, and praising him for mercies received, &c.

There are three things likewise forbidden in this commandment:

I. 'The making of any image for a religious use.'

II. 'The worshipping of images, implied in this phrase; 'Thou shalt not bow down to them, nor worship them:' whereby is meant, a yielding to them a religious worship and service, either inward or outward; both which are idolatry.

III. 'All will-worship,' which is the worshipping of God, for substance any other way than is appointed in his word, or the making any thing a necessary part of his worship, which he hath not commanded.

In this commandment, there are three reasons expressed, why we should diligently observe and keep the same; in these words; 'For I the Lord thy God am a jealous God.'

1. 'Because God hath a supreme power and authority over us;' implied in these words, *I the Lord;* to whose laws and commandments we own all faithful obedience.

2. 'Because he hath a propriety in us; a just right and title to us, as his own:' Implied in these words, 'THY God; for I am the Lord thy God.'

3. 'Because he is a God jealous for his worship:' Implied in this phrase, *I am a jealous God.* As a jealous husband cannot endure the lewd and unfaithful dealing of his wife: So, the Lord cannot abide undutifulness, or unfaithfulness in his worship. He hates *idolatry*, as much as an husband doth *adultery* in his wife.

Now God expresseth his jealousy about his own worship,

1. 'In punishing the breakers of this commandment, even to the third and fourth generation.'

2. 'In rewarding such as make conscience of keeping this law,' in these words; 'Shewing mercy to thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments.' Not that God's mercy extendeth to all, and every child, unto a thousand generations 'of them that love him and keep his commandments;' but only to such children as walk in the steps of their godly parents; whereof there is the more hope they would, by reason of their parents' prayers, and good example and instructions.

60. *Q.* What is the third commandment?

A. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain: For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

Expl. By the *name* of God may here be meant, as God him-

self, so his Titles, Attributes, and every thing whereby he makes himself known: Which are *taken in vain* three ways.

1. By our common using them in our ordinary talk.

2. By swearing by the name of God, and that in ordinary discourses.

3. By forswearing, or swearing falsely.

The reason to inforce the keeping of this commandment, is in these words; 'For the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain,' but will assuredly without true and unfeigned repentance, execute severe judgment upon them.

61. *Q.* Which is the fourth commandment?

A. Remember the sabbath-day to keep it holy, Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy works: but the seventh day is the sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy man-servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day; wherefore the Lord blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it.

Expl. As the first commandment shewed us *the true and proper Object of divine worship:* The second, *the means of worship;* The third, *the manner:* So this fourth, the *special time for divine worship.* Concerning which, there are three things expressed.

1. 'That some certain time ought to be set apart for the worship of God.' The light of nature teacheth, that God is to be *worshipped*, and that some time is to be set apart for the same.

II. 'God at the beginning appointed the seventh Day to be set apart for an holy sabbath.' It was meet that God, who made man for his service, should appoint him his own time for his own worship. This he did in paradise, Gen. ii. 2, 3. And afterwards on mount Sinai, where was a second edition of it.

III. 'Not only a part of the seventh day is commanded to be kept holy, but the whole day.' As God rested on the seventh day, so he is said to have sanctified it; that is, dedicated and consecrated it wholly to his own service; respect being had to nature, and the constitutions of men's bodies: for *God will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*

If it be asked which day of seven God hath appointed to be set apart for an holy sabbath?

I answer. 'That at the beginning of the world, God commanded the seventh and last day of the week, to be kept holy, which day was to be observed to the resurrection of Christ: And from thence to the end of the world, the first day of the week is to be kept as a christian sabbath.

Which day was kept and observed by the apostles in their time, and by the *christian church* ever since.

If you ask a reason for the change of the day? I answer,

That it might be a perpetual commemoration of the glorious resurrection of Christ, and of the great work of redemption accomplished by him; whereof he gave a clear evidence and demonstration by his rising from the dead.

As God, after he had finished the work of creation, rested and sanctified the seventh day, to be kept as an holy rest: So, Christ, after he had ended his great work of redemption, rested and sanctified the day of his resurrection, which hath since been kept by all christians in all after ages as an holy rest: The redemption by Christ being in some respects a more glorious work than the creation of the world.

Having thus proved the institution of the Lord's day; I proceed to shew you, 'how it is to be sanctified.' Namely,

I. 'By resting from our wordly businesses and employments, which is the least that can be meant by sanctifying a day and keeping it holy.

Neither may we ride abroad either for our profit or pleasure on that day; for God hath commanded, that the beast should rest thereon, Exod. xx. 10.

II. 'By resting from all worldly recreations;' as shooting, bowling, wrestling, ringing, dancing; as also from too liberal eating and drinking, especially wine or strong drink, at least so much as may make us either drowsy or unapt to serve God with our hearts and minds. In Isa. lviii. 13. the Lord requireth of his people, 'That they turn away their feet from doing their own pleasure on his holy day. For,

First, 'Sports and recreation are more apt to indispose the mind to the serious performance of holy duties, than honest labour.'

Secondly, 'Though recreations do not keep men from the public duties of piety, yet do they for the most part hinder them from the performing of private duties in and with their families, and oft-times from their secret devotions in their closets or chambers.' In which respect those sports and pastimes which may be lawful on the week-days, on the Lord's days are impious and profane.

Some, I know, are apt to plead on the behalf of servants, saying, shall they have no time for their recreation? No refreshing after their painful toil and labour? To such I answer,

First, To them who are wearied with bodily labour, rest must needs be the fittest refreshment for their bodies: and if they be spiritually minded, nothing can be more delightful to them than a conscionable performance of holy and religious exercises.

Secondly, If bodily recreations be thought convenient for servants sometimes, why must they be upon the Lord's-day, which God hath wholly appropriated to himself; and not rather on some week day? Hath God given to us six days, and reserved but one of seven to himself? and shall we be so disingenuous, as sacrile-

giously to encroach upon that, and steal away part of it for our own and our servant's recreation and refreshment?

III. 'The Sabbath is sanctified by keeping it a holy rest:' which is by consecrating this day of our rest, to the spiritual duties of that day, Exod. xx. 8. 'Remember the Sabbath-day, to keep it holy:' so that it is not sufficient, that we refrain from our own works, but we must likewise do the works of God, the duties of his worship and service. The duties by which the Sabbath is sanctified, are of three sorts, viz. *Public*, *Private*, and *Secret*.

I. 'Public duties of piety, are such as are performed in the public congregation:' In the conscionable discharge of which, God is most of all honoured.

II. 'Private duties of piety, are such as are performed in and with the family;' as praying, reading the scriptures, or some other good books; catechising, repeating the sermons heard that day, singing of psalms, holy conference, and the like.

III. 'Secret duties of piety, are such as are performed in our chambers or closets;' as reading, praying, meditating and examining ourselves. These are duties which must be acted between God and our own souls. As Christ went oft-times upon a mount to pray apart, so he bids us go sometimes into a secret place, to pour out our souls in prayer unto God. Mat. vi. 6.

IV. Besides the forementioned works of piety, there are two sorts of duties which may and ought to be done on the Lord's-day; namely, 'Works of necessity, and works of mercy.'

1. 'By works of necessity,' are meant, such as are of importance, and could not without great inconveniency be done the day before, nor put off till the day after.

2. 'By works of mercy,' are meant both such as appertain to the body of our neighbour; as giving of alms, visiting the sick, or such as are in prison: as also to his soul, as instructing the ignorant, comforting the afflicted, resolving the doubtful, reproving such as do amiss, especially such as live loosely and scandalously, to reconcile such as are at variance, and the like.

In the close of the fourth commandment, we find four reasons to press upon us a strict observation of the *Sabbath-day*.

1. 'The equity of it.' And indeed, what can be more equal, than that we should cheerfully spend the 'Seventh day in God's worship and service;' considering he hath allotted unto us six days of seven for our own affairs, and hath reserved but one to himself: whereas he might have required six days for his worship and service; and afforded unto us the seventh day for our own business, Exod. xx. 9.

2. 'The propriety which God hath in the seventh day, which he calls his own day:' It is God's enclosure, and not to be made a common, Exod. xx. 10. 'The seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God.'

3. 'A third reason is taken from God's own example,' who 'in six days made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day;' therefore man must do the same: God gave us an example, that we should follow his steps.

4. 'A fourth reason is taken from God's blessing the Sabbath-day.' For it is said, Exod. xx. 11. 'God blessed the Sabbath-day,' that is, He maketh the Sabbath a blessed day, or a day of blessing, an effectual means of good both to the souls and estates of those who carefully and conscionably observe the same.

First, 'To the souls of men.' Into how many dark souls hath God caused the light of his grace to shine on this day? making it a wedding day to many, a day of their espousals unto Christ? Thousands may date their new-birth from such or such a Sabbath. Now, hath God thus honoured his own day? and shall not we sanctify it? Hath he blessed it? and shall we profane it?

Secondly, 'God doth bless a conscientious observation of his day to our temporal, as well as our spiritual advantage;' 1 Tim. iv. 8. 'Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.' There is an universal gainfulness in real godliness: for it hath both heaven and earth entailed on it. Now, wherein doth true godliness more eminently appear, than in a strict observation of the *Lord's-day?* and therefore, the more conscionable we are in sanctifying that, the greater blessing may we expect from God in our callings upon the week days. If we begin the week with God on the first day of it, he will be sure to follow us with his blessing all the remaining part of it. The surest and safest way then to get estates for ourselves and children, is to keep holy the *Sabbath-day.*

To these reasons; I shall add one more, taken from the first word of the commandment, *remember*, set in the beginning of it; for which these reasons may be given.

1. 'Because of our proneness to forget to keep holy the Sabbath-day, and our great backwardness thereunto;' it being against the grain of corrupt nature to spend any time, much less any holy day seriously with God.

2. 'Because the life of religion, and of Christianity, lies much upon, and is maintained by, our keeping holy the Sabbath-day.' Whereupon, said a worthy divine now with God, 'Take away God's Sabbath, and religion will come to nothing.' And indeed, God never puts a *memento*, to any duty, but what is of great importance; God therefore prefixing it to this commandment, implieth the observing of it to be of high concernment; which, upon our peril, must not be neglected or forgotten.

62. *Q.* Which is the fifth commandment?

A. Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land, which the Lord thy God giveth thee.

Expl. This commandment containeth both a *precept* and a *promise*.

1. A *precept*, in these words, 'Honour thy father and thy mother.'

2. A *promise*, in the text, 'That thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee.'

Under *father*, and *mother*, in the *precept*, are comprised not only natural parents, but likewise all superiors, both in age and gifts; especially such, as by God's ordinance are over us in place and authority, whether in family, church or state.

Under the word *honour*, are implied all sorts of duties which we owe to our superiors.

2. 'To the precept of honouring our father and our mother, is added a promise of long life and prosperity, to those who shall keep this commandment, so far as it may tend to the glory of God and their good:' but, if God, in his *infinite wisdom*, seeing it better for them to be gathered to their fathers, and to be freed from sin and misery, take them away sooner, he hereby abundantly recompenseth the want of temporal life here, with eternal life hereafter.

63. *Q.* Which is the sixth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not kill.

In this commandment, are forbidden all ways and means of taking away either our own or other men's lives, except in case of public justice, or necessary defence.

64. *Q.* Which is the seventh commandment?

A. Thou shalt not commit adultery.

For the things forbidden in this commandment; know, that under the name of *adultery*, are forbidden all the kinds and degrees of *uncleanness*, as *fornication*, *rape*, *incest*, *sodomy*, and all *unnatural lusts*. It likewise forbiddeth all *speculative filthiness*, and *contemplative uncleanness*, which are not only sinful in themselves, but the 'panders of bodily defilements;' also all *bawdy speeches*, and *filthy communications*, which are apt to stir up *lust*, both in ourselves and others; and all outward acts of *uncleanness* and *filthy pollutions*. It likewise forbiddeth 'all occasions and incentives to uncleanness;' as the society of wanton persons, lascivious dancing, immodest attire, excess in eating and drinking, hearing filthy songs, reading amorous books, as *romances*, and the like.

65. *Q.* Which is the eighth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not steal.

The main thing forbidden in this commandment, is, 'The wronging of our neighbours in their goods;' which may be done several ways: not only by robbing them on the high-ways, and breaking into their houses: but also by using false weights and measures, by selling bad wares for good, by forestalling the mar-

ket, and engrossing a commodity, thereby to raise the price; by taking advantage of the ignorance of the buyer, or of the necessity of the seller; all which are forbidden in this commandment, 'Thou shalt not steal.'

And as we are here forbidden to wrong our neighbours in their outward estate, so likewise ourselves; which is too often done several ways:

1. By idleness and negligence in our callings, Prov. xviii. 9.
2. By an unthrifty ordering our estate, Prov. xi. 17.
3. By rash and unadvised suretyship, Prov. xxi. 17.
4. By an over-much love of pleasures, Prov. xxiii. 21.
5. By gaming for gain: every gamester though he intends his gains, yet, for the most part in the end sits down by the loss. There is hardly a greater consuming of men's estates, than by gaming. Every such gamester is a robber; he that loseth, robs himself, and he that wins, robs his neighbour.

66. *Q.* Which is the ninth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

This commandment forbiddeth three things,

1. *All lying;* not only the *pernicious lie*, which is made 'merely to deceive another;' but likewise the *sporting lie*, which is made only for *mirth:* and also the *officious lie*, which is told only for the 'preventing some prejudice, or procuring some good. God hateth every lying tongue,' Prov. xii. 17. Yea, 'all lying lips are an abomination to him,' Prov. ix. 21. And we find liars in scripture reckoned amongst *murderers*, *idolaters*, *whoremongers*, and other *heinous sinners*, whose *lot* and *portion*, without *sincere repentance*, will be 'hell-fire to all eternity,' Rev. xxi. 8.

This commandment forbiddeth, 'whatsoever is injurious to the good name of our neighbour:' as lightly to raise, willingly to hear, and rashly to give credit to any ill report of them; or unwillingly to hear their commendations: as also, to judge hardly of their sayings and doings, interpreting good things ill, and doubtful things in the worst sense. Yea, to blaze abroad their secret faults, especially such as sins of infirmity; aggravating the same by all imaginable circumstances.

3. But by this commandment, is particularly and expressly forbidden 'the bearing false witness against our neighbour before a magistrate;' which we do, when we testify that for truth, which we know not to be true; or what we know to be false.

67. *Q.* Which is the tenth commandment?

A. Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing that is thy neighbour's.

This commandment forbiddeth, as discontentment with our own estate; so 'inordinate affecting or desiring of any thing that is our neighbour's.' In the former commandments, we are forbid-

den to wrong our neighbour, either in his body, goods, or good name; here we are forbidden so much as to covet or desire any thing that is his.

I do not say, that every desire to have something added to our lot and portion, is here forbidden; but when it is inordinate; and that is,

1. 'When we desire more than is needful for our state and condition.'

2. 'When the desire is too eager and vehement.

3. 'When the thing desired too much affecteth us:' so that we are very much discontented till it be obtained.

Neither is all desire of that which is our neighbour's unlawful: we may not desire what is his, either, 1. 'Against his will,' or, 2. 'To his hurt and prejudice:' But we may lawfully beg, borrow, or buy that which is our neighbour's.

68. *Q.* Can any man perform exact obedience to the whole law of God?

A. No mere man since the fall of Adam, can perform exact obedience to the laws of God, but doth daily and hourly break them.

Here are two things expressed:

1. 'That no mere man since the fall, is able either of himself, or by any grace received, perfectly to keep the commandments of God.'

2. 'That every man doth daily break them in thought, word, and deed.'

The first of these doth appear from clear testimonies of scripture, Eccles. vii. 20. 'There is not a just man upon earth that doth good and sinneth not.' And James iii. 2. *In many things we offend all*, saith the apostle, including himself. This cometh to pass, by reason of the innate corruption which remaineth in the best, after they are sanctified by the Spirit of God.

I shall close this *Practical Catechism*, with a brief explanation of the LORD's PRAYER.

69. *Q.* Of how many parts doth the Lord's prayer consist?

A. The Lord's prayer consisteth of three general parts, namely, the preface, the petitions, and the thanksgiving.

70. *Q.* In which words is the preface of the Lord's prayer set down?

A. The preface of the Lord's prayer, is in these words, 'Our Father which art in heaven.'

Expl. Here God is described by his *goodness*, and by his *greatness*.

His *goodness* is implied in this title, *Father*.

His *greatness* is set forth by the chief place of his residence, which is *heaven*, where his glory is especially manifested.

The former sheweth how ready God is to hear and answer our prayers; being our gracious Father in and through Jesus Christ. The latter, how able he is to help us, and grant our requests.

71. *Q.* Which is the first petition?

A. 'Hallowed by thy name.'

72. *Q.* What is here desired?

A. That God in all things, at all times, by us and all other creatures may be hallowed and glorified.

For the better understanding this petition, know, that when we pray, 'God's name may be hallowed,' we desire,

1. 'That we ourselves may glorify God as in our minds,' by acknowledging him to be the Creator, Preserver, and Governor of all things: so, in their lives, by making his glory the main end and aim of all our actions, and ordering our conversation so as God may be thereby glorified, Mat. v. 16.

2. 'That others also may glorify the name of God;' that the whole world may *admire* and *adore his Almighty power*, his *infinite power*, and *all-ruling providence*.

73. *Q.* Which is the second petition?

A. 'Thy kingdom come.'

74. *Q.* What is here desired?

A. That the power of Satan may be weakened and subdued: that the kingdom of grace may be advanced by the daily increase of its members; and the kingdom of glory hastened by Christ's coming to judgment.

75. *Q.* Which is the third petition?

A. 'Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.'

76. *Q.* What is here desired?

A. That while we live here on earth, we may endeavour to yield such obedience to the will of God, as the saints and angels do in heaven.

In this petition we pray, that as the glorious angels, and the glorified saints, do the will of God, with all cheerfulness and alacrity, with all sedulity and diligence; with all affection and fervency; with all heartiness and sincerity: so God's will might be done by us in such proportion, as is suitable to our state, and in the same sincerity, and integrity, though not in the same perfection.

77. *Q.* Which is the fourth petition?

A. 'Give us this day our daily bread.'

78. *Q.* What is here desired?

A. That God would bestow upon us all needful temporal good things, and his blessing with them.

Bread is diversely taken in Scripture; but it is here taken both for that which we commonly call *bread*, and also for all temporal good things, needful for the preservation of this present life; and

for our outward good estate, as meat, drink, apparel, physic, and other things needful for our bodies.

79. *Q.* Which is the fifth petition?

A. 'Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us.'

80. *Q.* What is desired in this petition?

A. That God, for Christ's sake, would free us from the guilt and punishment of all our sins; and give us grace so to forgive others their trespasses against us, as we may thereby be assured of the forgiveness of our sins committed against God.

I. 'By forgiving our trespasses,' is here meant, 'a full acquitting and setting us free both from the guilt and punishment of all our sins; and that without satisfaction to be required on our part, but only upon the account of Christ's merits.'

The reasons why this clause ('As we forgive them that trespass against us,') is added to the petition, are,

First, 'As a motive to engage us to forgive those who have wronged us.' For we pray unto God to forgive us *so*, and no otherwise, than as we forgive others. If therefore we forgive not others, we pray God not to forgive us; but to condemn us. We are therefore mightily concerned to forgive, lest whilst we shut up our hearts from our brethren, we shut out God's mercy from us. 'For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy;' James ii. 13.

Secondly, 'As an evidence unto us of God's forgiving our sins and trespasses committed against him.' For our forgiving our neighbour, is a reflex or fruit of God's love unto us, in forgiving our sins committed against him. As therefore we would be assured of God's mercy towards us, in forgiving our sins committed against him, let us be willing and ready to forgive those who have wronged us, Mat. vi. 14.

81. *Q.* Which is the sixth petition?

A. 'Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.'

82. *Q.* What is here desired?

A. That God would preserve us from temptations unto sin; and being tempted, powerfully to succour us under them; and in his due time to deliver us from them.

There are three things expressed in this petition.

1. 'That we ought to pray for preservation from temptations unto sin.'

2. 'That we ought to pray for support under our temptations.'

3. 'That we ought to pray for deliverance out of the temptations, and from all that evil which we are tempted to.'

83. *Q.* In which words is the form of thanksgiving expressed?

A. The form of thanksgiving is expressed in these words, 'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

Expl. These words are set down, both, *as encouragements* to strengthen and support our faith in prayer; and also, 'as a form of praise and thanksgiving.'

I. The encouragements to embolden us to pray unto God in faith and confidence of being heard, are four;

1. 'The first is taken from his absolute sovereignty,' implied in this word, *kingdom;* 'For thine is the kingdom:' so that God only hath authority to dispose of things, and to dispense unto us all the afore-mentioned blessings, which we have asked of him.

2. 'The second is taken from his Almighty power,' whereby he is able to grant all our requests; yea, to do for us above all that we can ask or think; for to him nothing is impossible, Mat. x. 27.

3. 'A third encouragement is taken from the glory of God,' who being infinitely glorious in his mercy, truth, wisdom, and other attributes of his, we may be confident of his willingness to do for us whatsoever tendeth to his own glory and our good. How fitly then doth Christ, having prescribed sundry petitions which tend to the glory of God, teach us to put God in mind *of his glory*, for the strengthening our faith in obtaining them?

II. This phrase, 'For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever,' is set down, 'as a form of prayer and thanksgiving,' wherein God's Absolute sovereignty, Almighty power, Surpassing Glory and Eternity is acknowledged.

Whereby we are taught to join *praises* with our *prayers*, which is a duty that God highly esteemeth of, prizing and preferring it far above all legal sacrifices and burnt-offerings, Psal. l. 13. And as it is a duty pleasing unto God, so it will prove very beneficial to ourselves; for God loves to give to a thankful people.

III. The conclusion of the prayer in this word, *amen*, which doth imply both our *consent* to the whole prayer, as also *our earnest desire* of obtaining the forementioned blessings prayed for, and *our full assurance*, that God will accept our petitions and praises. For the word *amen* signifieth as much as *So be it*, and *so shall it be*. So be it, that is the voice of desire; and then the voice of faith is, *So shall it be*.

THE

Surest and Safest Way of Thriving.

MAT. X. 41, 42.

He that receiveth a prophet *in the name of a* prophet, *shall receive a* prophet's *reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, shall receive a righteous man's reward. And whosoever shall give unto one of these little ones, a cup of cold water only, in the name of a disciple, verily, I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.*

THE troubles whereunto God bringeth his ministers and people, though they be many and great, yet, are they not more, and greater, than the comforts which he affordeth unto them, to support and encourage them in their troubles. Instance this chapter, and the sermon of Christ therein recorded, concerning those sure trials whereunto his church and children should be brought. As any kind of affliction is foretold, a proper and peculiar consolation is usually annexed. Therefore, to establish the hearts of his suffering servants, and to encourage their succourers, he closes up his sermon with the words of the text; wherein he declareth, not only that high account which he had of his ministers, and people themselves, but also of them who should yield any relief, or upon his account shew kindness to them; assuring them, 'That he who receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, should receive a righteous man's reward.'

The words in brief contain, 'A declaration of that great benefit which they bring to themselves, who afford any relief and succour to ministers, or other saints; teaching, that there is no such way to fill our treasures, as by emptying them for God.'

For the clearing of the words; I shall briefly shew you:

I. Who is here meant by a *prophet;* and who by a *righteous man.*

II. What is meant by *receiving* them.

III. What is the *reward* which followeth thereupon.

I. For the first, who is here meant by a *prophet;* and who by a *righteous man.*

By a *prophet*, our Saviour here meaneth not only extraordinary ministers, such as were immediately and extraordinarily inspired by the Holy Ghost; or who had extraordinary revelations to foretell things to come: but also ordinary ministers of the word, and interpreters of the scriptures; as John iv. 44. Rev. xi. 18.

By *righteous men*, he meaneth his saints, or such as testify their justification through faith in Christ, by their sanctification, and fruits of a good conscience, whom commonly the scripture styleth *saints*.

II. For the second, what is meant by *receiving these ?*

For answer thereunto, you must know, there are two things, whereunto this receiving may have a respect.

1. To the *word* and *message* of a minister; and so it signifies, the hearkening to, and embracing their holy counsel and doctrine.

2. To the *person* of a minister; and so it signifies the harbouring, or shewing kindness to him; as is evident from the instance of *cold water*, given unto a *prophet* or *righteous man*, expressed in the following verse. Both these are implied under this phrase of *receiving a prophet*, *viz.* His *doctrine*, by embracing, and submitting to it; and his *person*, by harbouring, succouring, and relieving him according to his need.

'By the receiving a prophet in the name of a prophet,' is meant, a succouring and relieving him 'for his particular calling's sake,' *eo nomine*, because he is a prophet. So 'by receiving a righteous man in the name of a righteous man,' intendeth the same thing; namely, the relieving him, *for his general* calling's sake, because he is a Christian, a child of God, and a member of Christ.

III. For the third particular, what is here meant by 'the reward of a prophet; and of a righteous man?' I answer, these phrases of 'receiving a prophet, and of a righteous man's reward,' may be taken *actively*, or *passively : actively*, for that reward which a *prophet*, or a *righteous man* giveth : *passively*, for that which is by God given to the one, and to the other. 'The reward which a prophet giveth,' is ministerially to preach the word of reconciliation to such as receive them, as Peter did to Cornelius, Acts x. 34, &c. To pray for them, as Abraham for Abimelech, Gen. xx. 7, 17. And to bless them, as Melchisedec blessed Abraham, Gen. xvii. 19.

The reward which a righteous man giveth, is privately to instruct and edify, to pray for, and to be a good pattern and example of righteousness, to such as entertain, or otherwise relieve him.

'The reward which is given by God,' to either of these, for that kindness which any shew unto them, is such a surpassing and excellent weight of glory, as cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or angels, yet different in degrees; as is evident, Dan. xii. 3.

Some take these phrases, 'Of receiving a prophet,' and a 'righteous man's reward,' in the former sense, *actively;* and others, *passively*. I conceive it may be taken in both.

The words thus explained, do afford unto us several points of doctrine.

From the duty here expressed of receiving, and relieving *pro-*

phets and *righteous men*, with the manner of setting it down; we may observe,

1. *Doct.* 'That all needful succour, and good entertainment; is to be afforded to ministers of the gospel.' This is the main and principal point intended.

2. *Doct.* 'Christian-kindness is to be shewed not only to ministers, but also to all the members of Christ.' For our blessed Saviour contents not himself to have mentioned a *prophet*, but also addeth *a righteous man.*

These two sorts make up 'the household of faith;' to whom the apostle exhorteth Christians *especially* to do good, Gal. vi. 10.

Q. Is our charity to extend no farther?

A. Yes, even to all that are in want, but *especially* to such as have a particular relation to Christ, as being his members, or ministers; because Christ in them is after an especial manner succoured and relieved. It will be therefore our wisdom to take notice of the extent of this duty; and in all we do, either for Christians, or others, to see to it, that what we do, is done for the Lord's, and for conscience' sake; to the one in compassion to his members, to the other in obedience to his will.

4. *Doct.* 'According to the kindness which we shew, shall our reward be.' He that receiveth, and relieveth a *prophet*, shall receive *a prophet's reward:* and he that receiveth and relieveth *a righteous man*, shall receive 'the reward of a righteous man.'

Verse 42. 'And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold water, only in the name of a disciple, he shall in no wise lose his reward.'

These words are added by our Saviour to the former, to anticipate some objections which might be made thereupon; as also, more fully to explain the fore-mentioned points.

1. *Obj.* May be thus made, These preachers and professors of the gospel, are but mean persons, and little in esteem, What great reward can be expected for entertaining them?

Ans. 'As little as they be, be they as inconsiderable and contemptible as the proud world would make them, yet, are they not so little in the eyes of the Lord, but that he will reward all such as are friendly to them.'

2. *Obj.* I myself am but poor, and can do but little for them.

Ans. Though thy kindness be never so small, as small as a *cup of water*, and that *cold*, taken out of the river, without any pains or cost to heat it, yea, but ONE cup full of it, and no more, (supposing that to be the most thou canst do for them) yet, it shall be rewarded by Him, who more respecteth the willingness of the giver than the greatness of the gift.

The greatest difficulty in the words, is, who are here meant by *little ones*, for whose sake the reward is promised.

By *little ones*, our Saviour meaneth no other than such whom in the foregoing verse he had styled *prophets* and *righteous ones*.

They are called *little ones* in two respects:

1. 'In regard of the world's esteem of them.'

2. 'In regard of their own account of themselves.'

1. 'They are little in the world's eye.' The world which judgeth not according to inward worth, hath them in low esteem: it fares with the servants, as it fared with their master, they are despised and rejected, and trodden under foot of men. Of old they were accounted *desolate*, and *forsaken*, Isa. lxii. 4. In the apostles' time, the *filth of the world*, the *off-scouring of all things*, 1 Cor. iv. 13. Experience of all ages verifieth as much: And among other ages, ours giveth not the least evidence to it.

That comfort and contentment which God's people find in the Lord, and the light of his countenance, yea, that hope they have of finding grace in his eyes, make them the less to mind, and seek after the honour, wealth, and promotions of the world, and commonly they have but little of it. Now the world judgeth according to outward, earthly, worldly glory, it discerneth not the spiritual glory of the saints, 1 John iii. 1.

Judge not of men according to the world's judgment: think not ever the more meanly of saints, because the world thinks so of them. They are highly favoured of the Most High: they are such 'of whom the world is not worthy;' they are *the excellent ones*, Psal. xvi. 3. But whatever they be in deed, in the eye of the world they are but *little ones*.

Secondly, 'They are little in their own eyes,' Gen. xviii. 27. We read how Abraham in speaking to God, styles himself no better than *dust and ashes*, Gen. xxxii. 10. 'Jacob acknowledgeth himself *unworthy*, or, 'less than the least of God's mercies.'

The ground thereof may be, because the saints best know themselves, since they more thoroughly, than other men, search their hearts, and observe their ways, and compare themselves with the pure perfect law of God, and take notice of their inward secret corruptions, as well as of their outward and visible transgressions: And thus come they to know more of themselves, than any other can, or may suspect of them: And this clearer sight of themselves brings them down, and lays them low. This made St. Paul to cry out, Rom. vii. 24. 'O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?' This is a note of true grace, and of a sanctified heart. They are the *poor in spirit*, not the proud in spirit, that are Christ's blessed ones, Matth. v. 3. The false disciple thinketh highly of himself, and would be accounted not, *O micros*, a *little one*, like a true disciple of Christ; but *megas tis*, *some great one*, like to Simon Magus. Acts viii. 8, 9. This Spirit is a satanical spirit. Try the Spirit by this note, whether it be of God, or no.

But though all the servants of God are on the fore-mentioned account *little ones*, yet there are some among them less than others, *as in regard of their offices* and stations in the church, some are in higher, others in lower offices; some are in office, others not: So also *in regard of their parts*, and gifts, and graces; some are strong, and others are weak; some the chief, others the least of saints; some as the head, and others but as the finger, or the foot: and it is probable the text hath the most special respect (and the emphasis of it is the greater) to the least of all these little ones; and so the expression is, Mat. xxv. 40. In as much as ye have done it unto one *of the least* of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

This I the rather take notice of, to give an hint to Christians in their charitable distributions, to have an eye to such ministers, or Christians, as are more obscure, and less considerable in this world. Possibly when those of greater worth and remark may taste deeply of their bounty, every one almost hath a kindness for them: in the mean time there may be some poor hidden ones, whose worth is less, but their wants are greater, who being low in those gifts or graces which would commend them to the more public notice, are almost buried in forgetfulness. It is true, that by how much the more eminent the person is that is relieved, (*cæteris paribus*) by so much the more excellent is the work; yet special care should be taken, that the more obscure and least deserving among all that belong to God, be not forgotten.

The words thus explained, afford unto us two special points of doctrine.

1. *Doct.* God taketh notice of every one of his saints, even of the least of them, and of the smallest kindness shewed to them.

Though Joseph was but a lad, and sold as a slave, yet being one of the church, one of the little ones, yea, *minimorum minimus*; yet in Egypt God takes notice of him, and of that kindness which was shewed to him, Gen. xxxii. 5. Many other like examples are noted in the scripture; but none more fit for our purpose, than the example of Lazarus, Luke xvi. 20. Though he was a very poor beggar and full of sores, and despised of *Dives*, and all his household, yet God took such notice of him, as he made his angels attend him: Yea, God took notice of the kindness which the dogs shewed him, for their licking of his sores is recorded to all ages. Note those expressions of the Psalmist, Psal. xl. 12. 'But I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me.' And again, Psal. xxxiv. 6. 'This poor man cryed, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles.'

Q. If you ask, why the Lord taketh notice of every one of his saints?

A. 1. 'They are all his children, and of his household; therefore as a tender and careful Father and master, he careth for every

one: Yea, they are all members of the body of Christ. Now, the head taketh care of every member, even the least, and taketh notice of every kindness done to any of them.

2. 'They are all by reason of grace in them, as jewels and precious stones:' therefore as a provident *Jeweller*, he will look to every one of them. Yea, that which often appeareth least, may be of greater worth; as a little *diamond* is of more value than a far greater pebble.

This affordeth a singular ground of comfort to such as in this world are desolate, and forsaken: though they be left alone (as Elijah was, 1 Kings xix. 10.) And 'as a pelican in the wilderness, or an owl of the desert, or as a sparrow alone upon the house-top, as the Psalmist expresseth, Psal. cii. 6, 7. yet is the Lord with them, and takes care of them. Now if the Lord be with us, and taketh care of us, what need we fear? How should this encourage us to extend our charity to any one of the saints, and members of Christ, though mean and little in the world, and not able to recompense us: and, though none take notice thereof, to consider that the Lord taketh notice, and will abundantly recompense every good work, yea, the least kindness we do unto them. Heb. vi. 10. 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' Where 'God's not forgetting their labour of love in ministering to the saints,' doth imply, that as God taketh notice of their beneficence; so he is, and will be ever mindful of such and such persons to support and succour, and every way to do them good.

And if God will thus remember those that remember the least of his, how will he take it that they are neglected? Beloved, how is it with God's little ones at this day? Is it not very low with many of them? God takes notice how very low it is; and whether you will or no, God will not forsake them; but (that I may use the words of Mordecai to Esther, with some variation, Esther iv. 14.) if you altogether hold your hand at this time, relief shall arise to them some other way, but you and your house (take heed that word be not verified upon you) shall be destroyed. But who knows whether you are come to your estates for such a time as this!

And thus I come to the second and main point of *doctrine*, which ariseth from the *reward promised* to such as shew the least kindness to a *minister*, or *righteous man*, though it be but 'a cup of cold water, they shall in no wise lose their reward.' Whence we may observe,

2. *Doct.* 'That the least work of charity shewed to a minister, or righteous man, shall be abundantly recompensed; and that not only hereafter, but likewise here on earth.

Though our beneficence ought to extend unto all who are in want, and come within the verge of our knowledge, and power; as, Gal.

vi. 10. 'According as we have opportunity, let us do good unto all men;' yet I confine my discourse here to ministers, and righteous ones, because they only are implied under those little ones mentioned in my text.

That merciful men shall be abundantly recompensed hereafter in heaven for their works of charity, there is no doubt, being so clearly expressed in the word of God, Luke xvi. 9. 'Make yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' And, 1 Tim. vi. 17. 'Charge them that are rich in this world, that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation' against the time to come, that they may lay hold of eternal life.

But the great question is concerning *temporal reward*, 'Whether Christian charity, rightly performed, shall be recompensed here in this life with temporal blessings:' So that what men give in a way of charity, there is ground to expect, it shall be here returned into their bosoms again with increase.

I deny not but a charitable man may become poor, and be reduced unto some straits, through suretiship, negligence in his calling, or in respect of some secret sin wherein he liveth, which may justly bring a temporal curse upon him: So that his liberality, in such cases, may not be a sufficient fence against want and penury: But this I say, 'That as penuriousness towards the poor is the readiest way to poverty; so, Christian charity, rightly performed, is the surest way to plenty and abundance;' it being usually rewarded with temporal blessings here, as well as with eternal hereafter. Where is the man to be found, that is the poorer by what he hath given to the poor? How many are the instances of such who have met with some *signal blessings* from God in this life, as the reward of their liberality?

This may seem a *paradox* to many uncharitable men, that 'giving should be the surest way of getting; and that 'the more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to thrive and prosper in the world.' Yet, nothing is more clearly laid down in Scripture, and found to be true by the experience of multitudes of God's people in all ages. 'And I am verily persuaded, that there is seldom any man that maketh conscience of this duty, who giveth out to the poor proportionally to what God hath bestowed on him, and with an honest upright heart; but, if he do observe the passages of God's providence toward him, he shall find the same doubled, and redoubled upon him in temporal blessings.' I dare challenge all the world to give one instance, or at least any considerable number of instances, of any truly merciful men, whose charity hath undone them. But, as living wells, the more they are drawn, the more freely they spring and flow; so, the substance of charitable

men doth oftentimes, if not ordinarily, multiply in the very distribution; even as the five loaves, and few fishes, did multiply in their breaking and distributing; and the widow's oil increased by the pouring it out.

But these bare assertions being no full convictions: for the better clearing the truth of this doctrine, I shall prove it by *scriptures*, *examples*, and *reasons*.

1. 'For scripture proofs,' there are very many both in the Old and New Testament. What the apostle saith of *godliness*, 1 Tim. iv. 8. 'It is profitable unto all things, having the promise of this life, and of that which is to come: the like we may say of *charity*, It is profitable unto all things, having promises of *temporal blessings*, as well as of *spiritual* and *eternal*.

Deut. xv. 10. 'Thou shalt surely give unto thy brother, and thy heart shall not be grieved when thou givest unto him; because that for this the Lord thy God shall bless thee in all thy works, and in all that thou puttest thine hand unto.' It is not thine own labour or care, but the divine blessing that maketh rich; and of that blessing, behold here is a *scripture-entail* upon the liberal. And the like we have, Prov. iii. 9, 10. 'Honour the Lord with thy substance,' by giving out a portion of it for the relief of the poor, 'so shall thy barns be filled with plenty;' and, as thy *barns*, so thy *shop*, thy *cellars*, *ware-houses*, where thou bestowest thy goods, shall be filled with abundance; and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.' This seemeth to be an hyperbolical expression, yet, it signifieth no less than this, 'that God's usual way is to make good returns of all we lay out upon him, and his;' and that our wisest way, both for insuring and improving what we have, is to make ourselves creditors to his wanting saints.

A compassionate heart, and an helping hand, will gather by expending;. such *giving* is *getting*, such bounty is the most compendious way to plenty. Whereupon the wise man addeth, Prov. xi. 24. 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty.' Who is he that scattereth? not he that wastes his estate upon his throat, his back, and his belly; or, with the *prodigal*, upon *harlots;* but he 'that casteth his bread upon the waters,' as the expression is, Eccles. xi. 1. 'He that disperseth and giveth to the poor;' as Psalm cxii. 9. This is the scatterer in the text. And what of him? Is he wasted? Is he impoverished? behold, the quite contrary: the man is grown rich, 'he is increased by scattering.' Let him look to it that withholdeth more than is meet: this is the more likely man of the two to be found shortly on the dunghill. If thou wilt secure thyself from beggary, keep not God's beggars from the door, nor send them away empty, whose needs, though not their tongues, cry in their ears, 'Give for the Lord's sake.' Fear not to lose by laying out: thy laying up what thou shouldst lay

out, hath the most danger in it. The divine curse may wither that in thine hand, which thou holdest fast against the divine command.

In the following verse, we read farther, *The liberal soul shall be made fat.* The *soul* is often in Scripture taken to signify the *man;* and so it is here, and is the same as, the *liberal man. To be made fat*, signifies, to *prosper*, to be *full*, and *abound*, or, 'to grow rich in this world's goods:' and thus it shall be, if this Scripture may be credited.

The *liberal soul*, it is in the Hebrew, as you may find it noted in the margin, *the soul of blessing;* the merciful man is a blessing, and hath a blessing for such as need him: and he that is a blessing, shall be blessed; the Lord God shall bless him with an increase of his substance, who hath most emptied himself for him, and his. It is true, that the Soul of the liberal, properly taken, shall be a gainer by his liberality: no more *thriving Christians*, than the *merciful Christians;* what they expend in temporals, is abundantly returned in spirituals. But, because there is so much of *carnal*, even in too many Christians, and we have need of encouragements suited to our tempers; therefore, to our spiritual advantages, which are the greatest, these outward encouragements are added as often most taking with our too carnal hearts. So that, this is the sense of the place: The liberal man, as the reward and encouragement of his liberality, shall prosper in the world. And as it follows, *He that watereth* the soul of the needy, his waters shall not fail; but he *shall be watered also himself.* God will give in to him, according as he hath given out to others.

And, for their farther encouragement, saith the wise man, Prov. xix. 17. 'He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given, shall he pay him again.' If that which thou givest be repaid thee again, How can it be said to be lost? indeed the poor unto whom thou givest, are not able to repay thee again, yet, having an all sufficient surety as God himself, who hath undertaken the repayment, thou needest not doubt of it! Oh happy is that man, that becomes a creditor to his Creator, and makes God his debtor! whose is the earth, and the fulness of it. Heaven and earth shall be emptied, before he shall want a royal payment.

Fear not to be an usurer; so thou lendest unto God, make him thy debtor, and he will surely pay thee principal and interest. Allow him his time (for that he will have) and he will not only pay the debt, but allow thee for the forbearance. The ungodly borroweth, and payeth not again: but this shall never be said of the righteous God; he is just, and will make good payment of whatsoever is lent unto him.

It is true, the Lord loves to deal *upon trust*, and uses to make

payment by way of *returns*. He will be trusted, and those that will not give him credit, let them, if they can, put their estates into surer hands. And he uses to pay by the way of *returns*, it may be neither in the same kind, nor in the same country. Sometimes it is so, that he pays not in the same kind, bread for bread, or clothes for clothes, or money for money; nor possibly may he make his payment in this foreign land, where thou art a merchant adventurer, but may give thee his bill of exchange to receive it in thine own country, that better country, which is thy home, and inheritance; which shall be the reward of thy works, and labour of love, which thou shewest to his name. And if he do thus, does he thee any wrong? Is it not best for thee that thou receive thy goods at thy home? Is it any harm to thee to receive silver for thy brass, gold for thy silver, rubies for thy gold, a treasure in heaven for thy treasure on earth? doubt not that he will be behind hand with thee; yet stick not, if thou should be put to it, to wait for payment in full till hereafter: and for the present, this thou mayest depend upon, from Prov. xxviii. 17. 'He that giveth to the poor shall not lack,' he shall have in hand what is needful at least, 'He shall not lack;' and there may be more in this word, than if he had said, 'I will presently pay thee all:' for all that thou hast, if thou shouldst hold it never so close, cannot secure thee from ever coming to want; as great as thy abundance is, thou mayest come to want before thou diest. But what thy abundance cannot do, this promise of God can and doth for thee, even give thee security that 'thou shalt never lack.'

Again, Eccles. xi. 1. 'Cast thy bread upon the waters, for thou shalt find it after many days.' By *bread*, is here meant all things necessary for the support of men's lives. And, by *casting* their bread upon the waters, is meant, their giving freely of that which they have for the relief of the poor, whose watry eyes bewray their great necessity. And though that which thou bestowest on them, may seem to be as clearly lost and cast away, as that which is thrown down the river, or cast into the sea, where there is no likelihood of receiving it again, because given to those who can no way recompense thee; whence arose that Greek proverb, *Eis upoos speireis*, 'Thou sowest upon the water;' which is usually applied to such as bestow kindnesses, where they are utterly lost.

'Yet thou shalt find it after many days;' Lavater saith, upon this passage, that here is implied a promise of long life to the charitable, that God will lengthen out his days to a good old age. Though this falls out true in many, yet, I conceive it not to be here intended, nor to be the meaning of the words, but rather this; That though thy reward doth not presently appear, yet, if thou bestowest thine alms with a sincere heart, it shall not be lost, but certainly be returned into thy bosom with increase.

Yet further, saith the Lord, by the prophet, Isa. lviii. 7, 8. &c.

'If thou deal thy bread to the hungry, and bring the poor that are cast out, to thy house; and when thou seest the naked, if thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh,' by turning thy face from him; 'then' (see what a gracious promise of signal blessings follow hereupon) 'shall thy light break forth as the morning;' that is, Then shall the night of thine adversity be dispelled, and the day-spring of thy prosperity break forth as the morning light, *and thy righteousness shall go before thee:* that is, The fruit and reward of thy charity shall be visible to all: *The glory of the Lord shall be thy reward;* that is, the God of glory shall by his power and providence both go before thee, and follow thee with his blessing. And verse 10. 'If thou draw out thy soul to the hungry, and satisfy the afflicted soul;' that is, afford hearty relief unto him which shall satisfy necessity, 'then shall thy light rise in obscurity,' thy adversity shall be turned into prosperity, and 'the Lord shall guide thee continually, and satisfy thy soul in drought,' as thou didst satisfy the poor man's soul by supplying his wants, so the Lord will supply thee with a sufficiency in the greatest dearth and famine; 'and make fat thy bones; and thou shalt be as a watered garden, and like a spring of water, whose waters fail not; an emblem of a flourishing and prosperous estate, which doth usually follow and accompany merciful men.

Yea, our blessed Saviour, Mat. xix. 29. promiseth, that such as for his sake, shall this or any other way part with their estates, or any part or portion of them, 'shall receive an hundred fold here, and inherit eternal life hereafter:' Here in this life he shall have the return of an hundred-fold, which many Christians have found true in their own experience; and with thankfulness to God, have acknowledged as much.

And what variety of expressions doth our Saviour use in Luke vi. 38. to assure us of a large reward here of all our labour of love shewed to his ministers and members? 'Give,' saith he, 'and it shall be given to you again good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over.' For your encouragement unto this duty of giving to the poor, our Saviour first annexeth a general promise of return; 'Give, and it shall be given to you again;' where he giveth you a *bill of his hand*, that you shall be no losers by what you give to his poor, but shall be repaid, and that with advantage, as the following words declare; 'You shall have good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over.' We account it good measure, when it is *heaped up;* but, when it is not only heaped up, but *pressed down*, that is more: but, when it is heaped up, pressed down, and *running over again*, who can but say, that this is good measure indeed? yet thus, God deals with merciful men, they shall have mercies and blessings, 'heaped up, pressed down, and running over.' How truly then may I take up the words of the Psalmist, 'Blessed is he that considereth the

poor;' he shall not only be blessed, but he shall have blessings 'heaped up, and running over;' which the apostle St. Paul, expresseth very emphatically, by the similitude of *reaping* and *sowing*, 2 Cor. ix. 6. 'He that soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly; but he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.' As men sow, so shall they reap; the more liberally they give to good uses, the more bountifully they shall receive from God: they shall find a plentiful harvest, as the fruit of all their cost and pains. Dr. Hammond, in his Practical Catechism, quoting those words of the apostle, 'He that soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully, addeth this gloss; 'By *reaping bountifully*, I conceive, is meant, not only God's abundant retributions of glory in another world, but even his payments of temporal plenty, and blessings here, to those who have been willing to make that christian use of that earthly talent committed to their stewarding.'

Thus you see, there are so many promises both in the Old and New Testament of *temporal*, as well as of spiritual and eternal blessings to the merciful, that there can be no question made of the truth of the doctrine. And, to use the expression of the forementioned doctor, 'By all those testimonies from the word of God, both in the Old and New Testament, I conceive this doctrine as clear as any in the Scripture, that the promise of temporal plenty to the liberal, is so distinct and infallible, that it can be no less, than, 1. A very gross ignorance of plain scripture, not to observe it: and 2. An act of arrant infidelity, not to believe it.'

Though these proofs of Scripture are sufficient to convince any Christian of the truth of the doctrine, yet, for your further satisfaction; I shall briefly give you the judgment both of some ancient fathers, and modern divines concerning the same.

Non qui habet & servat, sed qui impertit est dives, & impertitio, non autem possessio divites facit. Clemens Alexand. Pædag. lib. 3. 'Not he who possesseth wealth, and keeps it by him, but he that distributeth it is rich:' neither is it the having, but the laying out of riches, that makes men rich.

'We lose all earthly things by keeping them, and by giving them away, we keep them.'

Lucrum est egenis dare, saith St. Basil. 'It is the best way of thriving, to give to them that are in want.'

'The field of the poor is very fruitful; and quickly yieldeth an increase to the charitable.'

The same father in the 25th sermon, *de verbis Domini*, brings in Christ speaking thus, *Da mihi ex eo quod dedi tibi; habuisti me largitorem. fac me debitorem, &c.* 'Give to me of that which I have given to thee; I have been thy benefactor, make me thy debtor, become an usurer to me, and I will pay thee with advantage.' And in one of his epistles, 'Give a little, and thou shalt receive an hundred-fold.'

'Give to the poor, and it shall be given to thee. Whatsoever thou givest to the poor, thou securest to thyself: what thou withholdest, another shall possess.'

'God twice pays what is lent to him, once in this world, by multiplying the wealth of alms-givers; and then in heaven he pays it over and over.' *Cornelius a Lapid.* in Prov. xix. 17.

Dr. Hammond in his sermon on Deut. xxvi. 12, 13. layeth down this proposition, 'That alms-giving or mercifulness, was never the wasting or lessening of any man's estate, to himself, or his posterity, but rather the encreasing of it.' And thereupon addeth, if I have delivered a new doctrine, which will not presently be believed; such as every auditor will not consent to, I doubt not, but there be plain texts of Scripture, more than one, which will assure every Christian of the truth of it: Consider them at your leisure, Psalm lxi. 1, 2. Psal. cxii. all to this purpose, Prov. xi. 25. and xii. 9. and xix. 17. and xxviii. 27. Add to these the words of Christ, Mark x. 30. which, though more generally delivered of any kind of parting with possessions for Christ's sake, are applied by St. Hierom, to the words of Solomon, Prov. xi. 24. 'There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth,' *quia centuplum accipiunt in hoc tempore*, 'because,' saith he, 'they receive a hundred-fold in this world.'

'All these being put together, must, saith he (to my understanding) make it as clear to any that acknowledge these for Scripture, as if God should call to a man out of heaven by name, and bid him 'relieve that poor man, and he should never be the poorer for it.' &c.

Afterwards in pressing upon his auditors the duty of alms-giving, 'Thus,' saith he, 'I am resolved on, it is want of belief, and nothing else, that keeps men from the practice of this duty. Could this one mountain be removed, 'the lessening of our wealth;' that alms-giving is accused of; could that one scandal to flesh and blood, be kicked out of the way, there is no other devil would take the unmerciful man's part, no other temptation molest the alms-giver.'

'And let me tell you, that you have no more evidence for the truth of Christ's coming, for all the fundamentals of your faith, on which you are content your salvation should depend, than such as I have given you for your security in this point.'

Dr. Jeremy Taylor, in his Rules of Holy-living, treating of alms, Sect. 8. among other Motives thereunto, hath this, 'That portion of our estate, out of which a tenth, or a fifth, or a twentieth, or some offering to God for religion, and the poor, goes forth, certainly returns with a great blessing upon all the rest. It is like the effusion of oil by the Sydonian woman, as long as she poured into empty vessels, it could never cease running: Or, like the wi-

dow's barrel of meal, it consumes not as long as she fed the Prophet.

Mr. Hildersham, in his 22d lecture on Psalm li. speaking of alms-giving, saith, 'It is a duty that God hath made greater promises unto, than to any other almost that a Christian can perform.' And three sorts of promises there be that are made unto it: 1. That it shall never hinder, nor beggar a man. 2. That that is thus given, shall not be lost, yea, it will return again with advantage and increase. 3. Yea, that that is thus given, will bring God's blessing upon all we have besides, Deut. xv. 10.

Dr. Thomas Jacomb, in his sermon on Mat. v. 7. preached at the Spittle, 1657. saith, 'God will return to the merciful man what he gives to the poor, he will reward him *in kind;* that look whatever it is that he bestows, it shall be *in the very kind* made up to him again; many have found this to be true: in the morning they have given, it may be, five shillings, and before night, God hath brought them in unexpectedly twenty for it. 'The best way for a man to increase his estate, is charity:' money here is like the widow's oil, 'the more it is *poured out*, the more it doth *increase*,' &c. and page 26. 'No man shall be the poorer at the year's end, for what he lays out upon the poor; you shall have your money again, and improvement for it too.

The author of the Whole Duty of Man, treating of alms in partition 17. saith, 'There is but one objection to be made against a cheerful giving of alms, and that is, The danger of impoverishing one's self by what one gives. To which he answers in these words; That this is sure a vain supposition, God having particularly promised the contrary to the charitable: 'That it shall bring blessings on them, even in these outward things. The liberal soul shall be made fat; and he that watereth, shall be watered also himself,' Prov. xi. 25. 'He that giveth to the poor, shall not lack,' Prov. xxviii. 27. and many the like texts there are: so that one may truly say, This objection is grounded in direct unbelief. The short of it is, we dare not trust God; for this giving to the poor, is directly the putting our wealth into his hands: 'He that giveth to the poor, lendeth unto the Lord,' Prov. xix. 17. and that too on solemn promise of repayment; as it follows in that verse, 'That which he hath given, will he pay him again.' It is amongst men thought a great disparagement, when we refuse to trust them: it shews, we either think them not sufficient, or not honest: How vile an affront is it then to God, thus to distrust him? Nay indeed, how horrid blasphemy, to doubt the security of that for which he has thus expressly past his word, who is the Lord of all, and therefore cannot be insufficient; and who is the God of truth, and therefore will not fail to make good his promise? Let not then that infidel fear of future want contract and shut up thy bowels from thy poor brother; for though he be ne-

ver like to pay, yet God becomes his surety, and enters bond with him, and will most assuredly pay thee with increase.

Therefore it is so far from being damage to thee thus to give, that it is thy great advantage. Any man would rather chuse to put his money in some sure hand, where he may both improve, and be certain of it at his need, than to let it lie unprofitable by him, especially if he be in danger of thieves or other accidents, by which he may probably lose it. Now alas! all that we possess is in imminent danger of losing; innumerable accidents there are, which may in an instant bring a rich man to beggary: He that doubts this, let him but read the story of Job, and he will there find an example of it. And therefore what so prudent course can we take for our wealth, as to put it out of the reach of those accidents, by thus lending to God, where we may be sure to find it ready at our greatest need, and that too with improvement and increase? In which respect it is, that the apostle compares alms to seed, 2 Cor. ix. 10. We know it is the nature of seed that is sown, to multiply and increase; and so do all our acts of mercy, they return not single and naked to us, but bring in their sheaves with them, a most plenteous and bountiful harvest. God deals not with our alms, as we too often do with his graces, wrap them up in a napkin, so that they shall never bring in any advantage to us; but makes us most rich returns: And therefore we have all reason most cheerfully, yea, joyfully, to set to this duty, which we have such invitations to, as well in respect of our own interest, as our neighbour's needs.'

Thus have you the truth of the point proved, both by divine and human testimonies. I should now proceed to give you some instances for the farther confirmation of it: But I must beseech you first to take these two *cautions*.

1. 'Not to ascribe the reward to any merit of your good works, but only to the free grace, and rich mercy of God.' It is his rich mercy that we have wherewithal to give, and his free grace that we have an heart to give, and his abundant goodness that he accepteth our works of charity, and rewardeth them with all sorts of blessings, both temporal, spiritual and eternal: But we cannot merit any thing at his hand, by giving him that which is his own.

2. 'Though our alms-deeds are sacrifices acceptable and well-pleasing unto God through Christ;' and though he hath bound himself by many gracious promises to reward the same both here, and hereafter; yet far be it from us to perform them merely out of hope of reward, but rather for *conscience' sake*, in obedience to the command of God, (who hath required them at our hands) and 'in testimony of our thankfulness unto him,' for what he hath graciously bestowed on us. As we are commanded to obey the magistrate, not so much for *fear of punishment*, and *hope of reward*, as for *conscience' sake*, in obedience to the command of God. Rom.

xiii. 5. so, ought we to distribute our alms, not so much for the reward's sake, as out of conscience for the Lord's sake.

I deny not but Christians in their well-doing, may for their encouragement have respect to the recompense of reward, but not only, and chiefly. The chief and principal ends we should aim at in all our good works, are, *the glory of God*, and *obedience to his command.* Our respect to the recompense of reward, ought to be subordinate unto these. The truth is, this temporal reward should not so much be looked on, as an *argument* to persuade us to give, but as an answer of an objection against giving. Thou wilt be ready to say, I may want it myself, or mine may want it: But do but believe that God will repay thee, and with *overplus;* and then that doubt will be taken out of the way.

These two cautions premised, I shall proceed in the confirmation of the point from the example of many charitable persons, who have in temporal mercies been abundantly recompensed for the kindness they have shewed to the ministers and members of Christ.

The widow of Sarceptah nourished the prophet Elijah in her house, during the whole time of famine: and how did the Lord abundantly recompense this her charity, by his miraculous preserving and increasing her meal and oil, whereby her family was nourished; as also by restoring her son to life again, after his soul was departed? 1 Kings xvii. 22. and by causing the prophet to continue with her many months, to feed her soul with spiritual, as she had his body with corporal food.

How abundantly was the Shunamite's kindness to the prophet Elisha recompensed?

1. 'By the gift of a son after long barrenness.'

2. 'By restoring her son to life again when he was dead,' 2 Kings xvi.

3. 'By forewarning her of a famine approaching,' 2 Kings viii. 1, 4.

4. 'By the restoring of her house and land, lost in her long absence, by reason of the famine,' 2 Kings iv. 28.

Notable is the instance of Job, What a merciful man he was, we may read chap. xxix. 12, 13, 15. 'I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him. The blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me, and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy. I was eyes to the blind, and feet I was to the lame; I was a father to the poor.' And chap. xxxi. 16. and 22. 'If I have withheld the poor from their desire, or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail, or have eaten my morsel alone, and the fatherless hath not eaten thereof: If I have seen any perish for want of cloathing, or any poor without covering; If his loins have not blessed me, and if he were not warmed with the fleece of my sheep, Then let mine arms fall from my

shoulder-blade, and mine arm be broken from the bone.' I have transcribed his own words thus at large, that I might set this worthy pattern before the reader's eyes.

But you will say, what became of this merciful man? did he prosper? did he flourish, and grow great? who so poor as poor Job after all these acts of mercy? How long after was it, that we find this *merciful man* a *miserable man*, stripped naked of all that ever he had? But first, it was not his *own mercy*, but Satan's *malice* that brought him down: It was the devil that set the Sabeans and Chaldeans upon him, to plunder and carry away all that he had. And, Secondly, what became of Job afterwards, after Satan had done his worst? You may read, chap. xliii. 10. &c. 'That the Lord turned the captivity of Job, and gave him twice so much as he had before, and blessed his latter end more than his beginning, for he had fourteen thousand sheep, and six thousand camels; a thousand yoke of oxen, and a thousand she-asses:' He had 'also seven sons, and three daughters.'

Acts xxviii. 7. We read how Publius, the chief man of the island of Melita (into which St. Paul, and many others with him were cast by shipwreck) received and lodged them three days courteously: And in the next verse, we read how the father of Publius, when he lay desperately sick of a fever, and bloody-flux, was recovered by St. Paul, and restored to his former health. So likewise the kindness which the barbarous people of that island shewed unto Paul, and his fellow travellers, was recompensed with the cure of many of their sick bodies.

To these examples recorded in scripture, I shall add a few more out of ancient and modern writings.

St. Alban (whom Mr. Fox in his first tome mentioneth amongst the martyrs who suffered for the name and cause of Christ) having received a poor persecuted minister into his house, was by his godly life and gracious exhortations so wrought upon, that he turned from *heathenism to christianity*, and at last suffered as a martyr for the truth of Jesus Christ; as Beda, and others write of him. His kindness to a poor persecuted minister, was recompensed not only with his conversion to the true religion, but likewise with the honour of martyrdom.

St. Austin having set forth the mercifulness and liberality of Constantine the Great, saith, *Bonus Deus*, Constantinum *Magnum tantis terrenis implevit muneribus*, &c. God gave Constantine, that merciful prince, more wealth than heart could wish, for his bounty to the poor. *Aug. de civitate Dei. l.* 5.

Dr. Hammond in his forementioned treatise mentioneth an ancient story out of Cedrenus, of a Jew, who upon reading those words of Solomon, Prov. xix. 17. 'He that hath pity upon the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again;' he resolved to try, whether God would be as

good as his word, thereupon gave all that he had but two pieces of silver to the poor, and then waited and expected to see it come again: But being not presently answered in that expectation, grew angry, and went up to Jerusalem to expostulate with God for not performing his promise. And going on his way, found two men a striving, engaged in an unreasonable quarrel, about a stone, which both walking together had found in the way, and so had both equal right to it; but (being but one, and not capable of being divided) they could not both enjoy: and therefore, to make them friends, he having two pieces of silver, doth upon contract divide them betwixt the contenders, and hath the stone in exchange for them. Having it, he goes on his journey, and coming to Jerusalem, shews it to the goldsmith, who tells him that it was a jewel of great value, being a stone fallen, and lost out of the high-priest's Ephod, to whom if he carried it, he should certainly receive a great reward. He did so, and accordingly it proved. The high-priest took it of him, gave him a great reward, and withal sharply reproved him for questioning the truth of God's promises, bidding him trust God next time.

The story of Tiberius the second is pertinent to this purpose, which take in the words of that reverend person before-mentioned in his sermon at the Spittle. This Tiberius was very famous for his bounty to the poor, insomuch that his wife was wont to blame him for it, and speaking to him once, how he wasted his treasure that way; he told her, 'he should never want money, so long as in obedience to Christ's command he did supply the necessities of the poor.' And presently see how providence ordered it! Immediately after he had given much this way, under a marble table which was taken up, he found a great treasure, and news was brought him too of the death of one Narses, a very rich man, who had given his whole estate unto him.

Famous is the story of that charitable bishop of Millain, who as he was travelling with his servant, overtook some poor people who begged an alms of him: whereupon he asked his man what money he had about him, who answered, three crowns; which he commanded him to give unto them: but the servant thinking himself wiser than his master, gave them but two crowns, not knowing what occasions they might have for money before they got home. Not long after, some noblemen meeting the bishop, and knowing him to be a very charitable man, appointed two hundred crowns to be paid to the bishop's servant for his master's use. The servant having received the money, presently with great joy acquainted his master therewith; whereupon said the bishop, thou mayest now see how in wronging the poor of their due, by keeping back the third crown which I intended them, thou hast likewise wronged me; *Si enim tres, dedisses, trecentos accepisses*, &c. 'If thou hadst given those three crowns I commanded thee to

give, thou hadst received three hundred crowns, whereas now I have but two.' *Melanc. apud Joh. Manlium in Loc. Com.*

It is recorded of Mary, the wife of Alexander Fernese, prince of Parma, that being childless, she conceived an hope, that if she would take in her house some orphan, or poor man's child, and there train him up, God would bestow a son upon her. Whereupon she took a poor man's son into her care, and gave order for his education, and according to her expectation, at nine months' end she was delivered of a son.

Suitable likewise to this point is the story of one John Stuart, provost of Air in Scotland, who was eminent for piety and charity. He had a considerable estate left him by his father; of which he gave a great part to the poor and other charitable uses. To pass by many, I shall mention only one. His heart on a time being much affected with the wants and necessities of many of God's people, who were in a suffering condition, he sendeth for divers of them to Edinburgh, where being met, and some time spent in prayer, he made them promise not to reveal what he was going to do, so long as he lived: and then told them he was not ignorant in what a low condition many of them were, and therefore he had brought some money with him to lend each of them, yet so as they should never offer to repay it till he required the same; soon after this, such a plague broke forth in Air, the place of his abode, that trade much decayed, and he himself with others were reduced to straits: Whereupon some of the profane in that place derided him, saying, that religion had made him poor, and his giving so much to others, like a fool had brought him to want; but mark what followed! Having borrowed a little money, he departs from Air, to Rochel in France, where salt and other commodities being exceeding cheap for want of trading, he adventured to freight a ship, and loaded her upon credit; and then went back again through England unto Air in Scotland, having ordered the ship to come thither: But after long expectation he was informed for certain, that his ship was taken by a Turkish man of war, the report whereof did exceedingly afflict him, not because he knew not how to be abased, as well as how to abound, but out of fear, that the mouths of wicked men would be the more opened to the reproaching of his profession and charity. But soon after, tidings was brought him that his ship was safely arrived in the road, and upon his going forth he saw it was a truth; and through God's good providence, as a reward of his charity he made so much of the commodities in the ship, that after the payment of his debts, he had twenty thousand merks left for himself. Though his bread was cast upon the waters; and to appearance lost, yet after many days it returned to him with great advantage. This story I lately read in a book, called, The fulfilling of the Scriptures.

Daniel Waldow, esquire, citizen and mercer, who was chosen

Alderman of London, is a further proof of this doctrine before laid down. I could from mine own experience speak much of his *bounty* and *charity;* as also of that 'plentiful estate wherewith God blessed him thereupon.' But I shall rather give it you in the words of that holy man, and blessed servant of Christ in the work of the ministry, Mr. James Nalton, now with God, who was more intimately acquainted with Mr. Waldow, and therefore the more fit to preach his funeral sermon, and to set forth his life for our *imitation.* His words are these, 'He was a man eminent, and exemplary, in the grace of charity; as appeared by his great bounty manifested on every occasion. Never any good man, minister or other came to propound any work of charity, public or private, that needed to do any more than to propound it: For his heart was so set upon works of mercy that he prevented importunity, by his Christian and heroic liberality. He made no more of giving ten pounds to a work of charity, than many other rich men make of giving ten shillings. His charity had two singular concomitants, which made it the more remarkable and praise-worthy.

1. He did good, while he lived: He carried his lanthorn before him: He made his own hands his executors, and his own eyes his overseers. Some will part with their riches when they can keep them no longer: This is like a cut-purse, who being espied or pursued, will drop a purse of gold, because he can keep it no longer. But to be doing good in our lifetime, while we have opportunity; this is an act of faith, and an evidence that we can trust God with our estate, and our children, that he will provide for them when our heads are laid in the grave.

2. He dispensed his charity so secretly, without any self-seeking, or pharisaical vain-glory, that his left hand did not know what his right hand did. Therefore did he often go with an hundred pounds under his cloak to some godly friends, desiring them to distribute it amongst such honest poor people as stood in most need of relief.

In short, He did so much good while he lived, as if he meant to have nothing to do when he died; and yet he gave so largely when he came to die, as if he had done no good when he lived.

Many, I know, are apt to say, they have many children, and therefore cannot give. So had Mr. Waldow; he had nine children alive at his death, but the providing for them was no obstruction to his charity, nor prejudice to his children, but did rather entail a blessing upon them.

Mr. John Walter, citizen and draper of London, was signally charitable, not only at his death, but in the whole course of his life, even from his younger years. For the avoiding vain-glory, his manner was to send considerable sums of money to several poor families, by the hands of others, in whose faithfulness he could confide. Whereupon God did not only bless him with a

large estate, but likewise give him such contentedness therein, that he sat down abundantly satisfied: and made *a solemn vow and promise unto God*, that he would give the surplusage of his estate, whatever it was that for the future should accrue unto him from his calling and employments, to charitable uses. That you may be assured of the truth of it, I have here given you his own expressions transcribed out of his last will and testament, which are as follows:

'I thought fit to declare, that about twenty years past, when the Lord had entrusted me with a convenient estate, sufficient to maintain my charge, and afford fit portions for my wife and children after my decease; I resolved that what further estate the Lord should be pleased to entrust me with, to bestow the same on charitable uses.'

After this vow finding his estate wonderfully increased, he began to build *alms-houses:* one in the parish of St. George in Southwark; another in St. Mary Newington; because in those parishes he observed, there were many blind, lame, distressed poor people, and never an *alms-house* in them. He likewise built a *chapel* near one of his alms-houses for the poor people to serve God in daily. Having built his *alms-houses* with the poor's stock he bought lands, and houses of inheritance which he settled upon the company of drapers; as for the relief and support of his alms-people, after his decease; so for the performing other charitable gifts mentioned in his last will and testament. While he lived, he was wont to go himself once a month to his alms-houses in his worst cloaths (that he might not be suspected to be the founder of them) and gave unto the poor people their promised allowance. Doubtless that is the best charity which Nilus-like, hath the several *streams thereof seen*, but the *fountain concealed.* Having built his alms-houses, and endowed them with a good revenue; then with the remainder of his *poor's stock* (which daily encreased through God's blessing upon his pains and endeavours in his calling) he relieved *poor people*, and families, with considerable sums of money; and gave much bread weekly to the poor of several out-parishes. All this he did whilst yet living; besides what he gave on the like account at his death, which was also very considerable, as further appears by his will. Notwithstanding of all which, he gave and left to his wife, and his two daughters, above ten thousand pounds. This questionless is the surest way to have our wills performed, to see them performed in our life-time; in regard that many *executors* prove *executioners* of *wills.*

William Pennoyer, esquire, citizen and merchant of London, a person wholly composed of *mercy* and *goodness*, *bounty* and *liberality*, which he expressed in the whole course of his life, even from his first setting up in the world. Many years before his death, he turned great part of the stock wherewith he traded, into lands of

inheritance, to the value of *four hundred pounds per annum;* and being eminently charitable, he lived as frugally as he could, spending about two hundred pounds a year upon himself, wife, and family; and the remaining part of his incomes, he wholly bestowed on charitable uses, as I have been informed by those who lived along with him; and were nearly related to him.

To give you a clear demonstration of his Christian charity and of God's recompensing the same unto him here in this life with temporal blessings: I shall recite some of his legacies bequeathed in his last will and testament to charitable uses, passing by such as he gave to his rich kindred and acquaintance.

To poor ministers, widows, and others in distress, about 150l.

To four of his poor tenants, 20l.

Likewise, 800l. to be laid out here in woollen cloth, or other commodities, to be sent to New-England, for the use of his poor kindred there.

He gave to certain trustees lands, to the value of 20l. *per annum*, to pay for the teaching of forty boys at school.

To Bristol, 54l. *per annum*, towards the maintenance of a schoolmaster, and lecturer, to preach a week-day lecture there; and to other charitable uses.

He likewise settled 20l. *per annum*, on trustees, for the teaching of forty poor children in or near White-Chapel; and 40s. yearly, to buy bibles for some of the children.

He gave 12l. *per annum*, for the maintaining a school at the Hay, in Brecknockshire; and 40s. more yearly to buy books for the scholars.

As also, 10l. *per annum*, for the maintenance of poor distressed people in the hospital of Bethlehem in London.

And 10l. *per annum*, to ten of the blindest, oldest, and poorest cloth-workers, at the discretion of the masters, wardens, and assistants of the said company, for the time being.

He gave 40l. *per annum*, to Christ's Church hospital, for the placing out four children yearly; and 40s. more yearly to buy each of the children a bible.

Besides these, he gave to his poor kindred above 2000l. by his will.

And by a codicil annexed thereunto, he bequeathed to certain trustees, 1000l. to be given to honest poor people; as also, 300l. for releasing poor prisoners; which sums have been paid into the hands of the trustees by Mr. Richard Loton, and Michael Davison, Esq.; who, to their honour, have approved themselves faithful Executors to this charitable will.

Thomas Arnold, citizen and haberdasher of London; at his first setting up for himself, his stock was not great; but being charitably disposed, and ready to every good work, his estate, through God's blessing, very much increased.

His charity, in his life-time, appeared not only by his forwardness to communicate to the relief of such whom he saw in want; but likewise by his frequent inquiring of others, after such poor people as were overburdened with children, or otherwise distressed: yea, he hired men with money, to make it their business to find out honest poor people, on whom he might bestow his charity; and likewise, did entrust others with considerable sums of money, to distribute amongst the poorer sort, charging them to have special respect to the honest poor, such whom they conceived did truly fear God. That he was no loser, but a gainer by his liberality; appeareth, in that God so blessed him in his calling, that he attained to an Alderman's estate, and was chosen to that Office. Yea, he gave over his calling in the city, and withdrew himself into the country, that he might the better mind God, and the concernments of his soul more, and the world with its concerns less.

John Clark, doctor of physic, one of great repute for his learning, piety, and charity; some while President of the College of Physicians. His custom was to lay by all his Lord's-days fees, as a sacred stock for charitable uses; devoting that entirely to God, which he received on his day; accounting it a piece of sacrilege, to appropriate it to himself, or any common use. Whereupon the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his calling, that though at first his practice was little, and his estate not very great, yet, afterwards his practice so increased, and the world so flowed in upon him, that he lived plentifully and comfortably, and gave to his children liberal portions.

The like also was practised by John Bathurst, doctor of Physic, with whom I was very well acquainted; his Lord's-days fees were constantly kept as a *bank for the poor*, and wholly devoted to, and employed for their use, which was so far from lessening his incomes, that, by the blessing of God upon his practice, they were greatly in few years augmented by it. For, though at his first coming to London he brought little estate with him, and here had small acquaintance, Yorkshire being his native country, where he had spent his former days; yet, the Lord was pleased so to prosper him in his calling, that, in twenty years time, he purchased lands of inheritance, to the value of 1000l. of yearly value.

Dr. Edmond Trench, likewise observed the same course, as his wife, and divers others of his friends do testify. And certain it is, that this was no damage, but a great advantage to him; for he had as many patients as his weak body would permit him to visit. And, though he lived at a full and plentiful rate, frequently and cheerfully entertaining ministers and scholars at his table; yet, did he gain a very considerable estate, which he left to his wife and children; in whom not only his memory, but his piety still survives.

I have good ground to believe, that many other Physicians do make conscience of this duty; but Oh that all would do the like! certainly they would be no losers thereby at the year's end, but find God's blessing upon their calling and estates, prospering them in both.

And here to me occurs a case of conscience, worthy to be enquired into, viz. Whether physicians may lawfully appropriate unto their own private use their Lord's-days fees; I mean, those fees which they receive from their patients on the Sabbath-day?

I deny not, but *works of mercy* may, and ought to be done on that day; for, saith the Lord, Mat. ix. 13. 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice;' that is, mercy rather than sacrifice. And, I deny not, but of the richer sort especially, they may receive their fees for their pains. But, I much question, whether they may appropriate those fees to themselves; in regard, the Lord hath afforded us six days of seven, whereby we may and ought to follow our callings for our own livelihood, and of those who belong unto us; but hath sanctified and set apart the Christian Sabbath for his own honour and service. And therefore, it seemeth but reasonable, that what accrues unto us on that day, should be set apart, and employed for his more immediate use and service. But, I will not impose this as a necessary duty, at least, upon all, in regard that circumstances may vary; but leave it at present to the determination of their own consciences, who are most concerned therein.

Samuel Dunche of Pusey, in the county of Berks, Esq.; a person, that according to the apostle's rule, 'did good to all, but especially to those of the household of faith:' his custom was to send money yearly to several towns, as to Stow upon the Woolds in Glocestershire, to Norliche, to Lamburn, and others, not here mentioned, for the relief of their poor; and upon the last here named, he settled lands of inheritance for ever, for the same use. And to Rumsey in Hampshire, he gave by deed, upon the like account, a lease of 99 years, to commence after his decease. The poor also of the said town, whom he called his Alms-People, had, during his life, weekly relief from him; and many other towns, together with them, were large sharers in the like bounty.

Several poor children of the said town, and likewise of those belonging to Faringdon, he set to school, and did not only pay for their teaching, but also furnished them with all such books, as were fit and convenient for them. He also caused several books to be printed at his own charge, which he freely gave to the poor, that they might the better be encouraged to read and to acquaint themselves with the concerns of another and better life.

He further gave considerable sums of money yearly, for the constant supply of such godly ministers, as he knew to be in want: and upon several of them he settled considerable annuities, 10l.

20l. *per annum*, for their lives; besides such legacies which were not small, which he gave to some of them at his death.

Besides all this, his hand was ever open and ready to distribute, whenever any fit occasion was offered to him; yea, such was the enlargement of his heart, and tenderness of his bowels, that he could hardly pass by any, whom he judged due objects of his charity, but he freely and bountifully contributed to their relief.

Thus did this pious gentleman honour God with his substance, and adventure upon the royal Prophet's words, 'to cast his bread upon the waters;' which, though the unbelieving world accounts but folly, and usually reckons it amongst their losses; yet he, to his advantage, according to the promise thereto annexed, 'found it again after many days.' His bread, like the loaves with which Christ fed the multitude, was multiplied in his hands, and his oil increased by pouring out. He was but a younger brother, and the estate settled upon him was but 300l. *per annum*, or thereabouts: and yet, notwithstanding (I had almost said) this excess of charity, his estate was so far from being ruined, or in the least impaired, as that not only the same bare measure he received, but 'much greater, pressed down, and running over, was meted out to him and his posterity.' So signally did God in this life reward his charity, wisely ordering by his good providence, that one way or other large handfuls, as over-measure, were from several hands thrown into his bushel. There is now left to his heirs an estate of more than the double value of what he received from his father, besides the portions which he gave to all his daughters, five in number, which were very considerable, to some of them more than 2000l.

And here, I hope I may without offence, or vain-glory, take liberty to mention, amongst others, the charity, and liberality of my dear and honoured father, Dr. William Gouge, late pastor of Black-friars, London, who was eminent, as in other graces, so in that of charity: from him I first heard, 'The tenth part of a man's estate, to be a fit proportion to be devoted and dedicated to God for charitable uses.' But, though he commended that to others, yet, by what I find in some papers written with his own hand, I may truly say, he gave the 'seventh part of all his yearly comings in,' towards the maintaining poor scholars at the university, and the relieving poor families, and distressed persons. And how wonderfully God blessed, as his ministry, so his outward estate, is so well known to all who lived in his days, that I suppose it needless for me to say any thing of it; only I may truly apply unto him the words of the Psalmist, 'He was ever merciful and lending, and his seed is blessed.'

Many more instances of the like nature might here be added; some of persons, who are now with joy reaping in the other world, the blessed fruit of that seed which they had so plentifully sown in

this: others of persons, yet living amongst us, some of which have acknowledged to me, 'That God hath already rewarded them an hundred fold, for what they have lent to him, by giving it to his poor.' But those already mentioned, may be abundantly sufficient to evidence the truth in hand, and to encourage and provoke us in imitation of those worthies, to a more ready and conscientious practice of this great duty, so essential to Christianity, so well pleasing to God, so creditable to our profession, so beneficial, not only in order to our eternal happiness, but our present gain, and comfort, and prosperity here on earth.

The point thus being proved by Scriptures and Examples; come we now to the reasons for the further confirmation of it.

1. Reas. 'May be taken from the goodness and bounty of God,' which is such, that he will not suffer any work of charity, shewed to any of his ministers, or children to pass away unrewarded, without a full recompense: whereupon, saith David, Psalm lxii. 12. 'Unto thee, O Lord, belongeth mercy: for thou renderest to every man according to his work.' Though God doth not render a reward to any man for his work done, yet, doth he render to every man according to his work. Yea, God doth always exceed in his remunerations, to give evidence of his grace and bounty. God will not be in any man's debt long, but what he hath disbursed upon his account, he will speedily return into his bosom with advantage.

2. Reas. 'May be taken from the faithfulness and righteousness of God,' who, having in his word graciously promised abundantly to recompense and reward our beneficence, his faithfulness and righteousness engageth him to make good what he hath promised; so that, he cannot but be as good as his word. Men may be forward in promising, but slow in performing: but, with God, who is the true and faithful one, *dictum & factum*, 'saying, and doing,' are both alike; 'All his promises are yea, and amen in Christ Jesus,' Heb. vi. 10. saith the Apostle; 'God is not unrighteous to forget your work, and labour of love, which ye have shewed towards his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.' Here the Apostle argueth a certainty of reward to those who minister any thing to the saints, from the 'righteousness of God,' even because he is righteous; and therefore, will not fail to do what he hath promised. He is not unrighteous to *forget*; that is, He will righteously remember; and God's remembering, signifies the same as recompensing: as he will remember sinners, by recompensing their evil ways upon their own heads; so, he will remember his saints, by returning the good that they have done into their own bosoms.

The more to assure us of such kind of remembrance from God, the Holy Ghost mentioneth certain *books*, or 'rolls of remembrance written before God,' wherein the merciful deeds of his servants

are recorded. So that, it is no more possible that such as are charitable, benign, and helpful to the poor ministers, and people of God, should lose their reward, than that God himself should cease to be righteous, or be forgetful of his word.

3. Reas. 'May be taken from several metaphorical expressions used in Scripture, by which alms-giving is represented to us;' all which imply not only a certain return, but that with increase, as *sowing*, and *lending*, and that upon usury.

1. 'We find it set forth in Scripture, by *sowing*,' 2 Cor. ix. 6. 'He which soweth sparingly, shall reap sparingly, and he which soweth bountifully, shall reap bountifully.' This proverbial speech, the apostle applieth to the dispersing of alms. Now, as husbandmen, who sow their corn with a liberal hand, do usually reap a crop answerable thereunto: in like manner, such Christians, as shall sow their seed of charity with an open, plentiful hand, shall reap accordingly a plentiful crop, they shall find their seed sown come up with increase, yielding *thirty*, if not *sixty*, or *an hundred fold here*, besides eternal life hereafter. It may be, thou mayest not presently reap the fruit of thy seed, and, what wonder? Who is there that sows, who expects to reap the same day? the husbandman waiteth for his harvest; wait thou on the Lord, and doubt not but an harvest will come, that will pay thee both for thy sowing, and thy waiting.

2. The second metaphor, whereby alms-giving is set forth in Scripture, is *lending*, and that upon use, Prov. xix. 17. 'He that hath pity on the poor, lendeth unto the Lord, and that which he hath given, will he pay him again.' Men that lendeth to men, receive their own with increase: what they lay up lies dead, and possibly the thief may break in and steal it away; but, what they lend, if to sure hands, come in with advantage: how rich do some usurers grow by this trade of lending? and, though it be a paradox, that *giving* is a richer trade than *lending*, even upon use; yet, it is a certain truth; for this giving is lending: and he that lends to the Lord, will find a greater income at the year's end, than he that lends to the best of men. Therefore, as one well saith, 'Giving to the poor, is not the way to waste our wealth, but the art of thriving, and the most compendious course to attain unto riches.' Though our alms deeds seem (as the seed sown) to perish, and rot; yet, believing what we see not, we shall assuredly see, what we believe, and find (even here) such a fruitful increase, as we shall conclude, 'That giving to charitable uses, is the surest and safest way of getting, and thriving in the world.'

Thus have you the truth of the point confirmed by Scriptures, Examples, and Reasons. Come we now to the application.

1. 'Use of reproof, of all unmerciful men,' who, notwithstanding the many charges God hath laid upon us, 'To be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate, to draw

forth our souls to the hungry, to open our bowels to the needy; and the manifold encouragements he hath given us in his word hereto, yet do shut up their bowels of compassion from them, refusing to afford them any succour or relief.' Surely, such have no love to Christ: for, Who can say, he loves the Lord Jesus Christ in truth and sincerity, when he suffers his ministers and members to want necessaries, even food and raiment?

I will not condemn all for unmercifulness (God forbid I should) many there are (and I would to God there were more) who do contribute bountifully to the necessities both of ministers, and other poor saints of God. But yet I have too great cause to say, that the greatest part of rich men amongst us, have their hearts hardened, and their bowels shut up, that they cannot compassionate their wants; and their hands withered, like his in the gospel, that they cannot reach them out to any good use.

O that such would consider, that unmercifulness is a greater sin than they do imagine. It was one of Sodom's sins, which fetched down fire and brimstone from heaven upon them, and all their children, Ezek. xvi. 49. 'Uncharitable men are cursed, as in their life, so at their death; but, most cursed will they be at the day of judgment: being barren fruitless trees in God's orchard; they shall with the barren fig-tree, be surely cut down, and cast into unquenchable fire.

More particularly, to shew you the miseries of uncharitable persons.

1. 'They are accursed here in every thing; all they have is cursed:' So much is implied in that expression of our Saviour, Luke xi. 41. 'Give alms of such things as you have, and all things are clean unto you;' but, without alms-giving, nothing is clean unto you; that is, Nothing is blessed and sanctified unto you, for all things are defiled and cursed; not only your crosses are curses, but your blessings are curses unto you. So God threateneth, 'to curse their very blessings,' Mal. ii. 2. Though thou enjoyest abundance of this world's goods, yet, so long as thou art hard-hearted to the poor and needy, the curse of God cleaves to thy store and abundance. Oh how sad and lamentable must thy conditions needs be, when those things which are not only blessings in themselves, but likewise blessed unto others, should be accursed unto thee! surely, to be thus accursed, is misery enough.

2. 'As the unmerciful are cursed here, so shall they be cursed hereafter,' Jam. ii. 13. 'He shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy.' Such as have shut up their bowels of compassion against the necessities of the poor, God will shut up his bowels of compassion against them, and let forth his fury upon them, they shall have their portion in his plagues and indignation, without the least drop of pity or mercy. And at the day of judgment Christ will say unto them, Mat. xxv. 41. 'Depart from

me, ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels :' there is their doom; and why? 'For I was an hungry, and ye gave me no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink.' O dreadful sentence! every word whereof carrieth much terror in it, and breatheth nothing but fire and brimstone. What! must they depart from Christ, the fountain of bliss and happiness? and into everlasting fire? Ah wretches! cursed indeed. For, as the prophet speaketh, Isa. xxxiii. 14. 'Who can dwell with devouring fire, who can dwell with everlasting burnings?' An everlasting fever, or but an everlasting toothache, were a misery unspeakable. But, what are these, to the 'lying in that lake, which burneth with fire and brimstone to all eternity?'

3. 'The misery of uncharitable persons appeareth in this, that the wants and necessities of the poor cry loud to heaven against them.' God hath dealt bountifully with thee, loading thee with his benefits (as the Psalmist speaketh, Psal. lxviii. 19.) and hath given thee not only food and raiment, things needful and necessary, but an abundance, an affluency of outward things, even all things richly to enjoy: but how many of Christ's ministers and members are in great want, not having wherewithal to satisfy their own and children's hunger? whose miseries, like the blood of Abel, cry unto God for vengeance against thee, saying, 'Lord, there are not a few who have enough, and to spare, a liberal portion of this world's goods, with Dives they fare sumptuously every day: but what are we thy wanting servants the better for them? Who of us are warmed with their fires, or clothed with their raiment, or so much as partake of the crumbs of their table? We are ready to perish for want, when they are surfeited with their abundance. Is the blessing of them that are ready to perish like to come upon them? Wilt not thou judge them, O Lord?' Certainly these bitter and lamentable complaints cry loud in the ears of the Almighty against such unchristian and unhumane miseries. Beware of the cry of the poor against you: If thou wilt not hear their cries unto thee, God will hear their cries against thee.

3. 'Thy mercifulness to the poor will provoke God to reject thy most religious exercises; Prov. xxi. 13. Whoso stoppeth his ears at the cry of the poor, he also shall cry himself; but shall not be heard.' In which words Solomon hinteth to us two things.

1. That unmerciful men, such as turn away their ears from the cry of the poor, shall fall into such miseries as will bring them to their knees, and make them cry sooner or later. Here in this world, worldly men sometimes make many prayers, and their religion they hope will make amends, for their inhumanity at least. But in the world to come, they shall follow their fellow Dives in his infernal devotion.

2. 'Though they cry, yet they shall not be heard;' whether

they cry here upon their death-beds for mercy, or hereafter in hell for ease, they shall not be heard. A notable instance hereof we have in Dives, who though he cried not here, yet he cried in hell, saying, Father, Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue for I am tormented in this flame, Luke xvi. 24. But was he heard? was his request granted? it was a small request, but yet it is denied. Because he denied crumbs of bread here in this life to the poor, he was denied a drop of water in hell.

O that all uncharitable persons would steep their thoughts in a serious meditation of these things: and as they desire to prevent those judgments which accompany all merciless men, they would put in for a share in the mercies of the merciful, and to that end, would put on bowels of pity and compassion towards the wants and miseries of God's distressed ones, and stretch forth an helping hand towards their relief, which leadeth me to a second use, namely,

2. 'Use of exhortation, to stir up every one who have given up their names unto Christ, to make conscience, as of every duty commanded by him, so of this especially, which he hath so vehemently pressed upon us in his word, and encouraged us unto by many sweet and precious promises.

It is observed, that they are the richest merchants and citizens who trade boldly; whereas they who are fearful to adventure their goods, have but small returns. In like manner, it is found by experience, that such christians as are most forward to supply the wants of the poor, boldly adventuring their goods upon the waters, do most of all thrive, and prosper in the world. Why then will any man be so unwise, as to lose his riches for fear of losing them? and not rather seem to lose them that he may in truth find them? These earthly things are assuredly lost by keeping, and kept by well bestowing them.

What now remaineth but that you look about you, where you may lay out your money to your best advantage? Make diligent enquiry after the poor ministers and members of Christ. Seek more after them than they do after you. For most certain it is, that you get more by giving unto them, than they do by receiving from you. And you are more beholden unto them for receiving your charity, than they are unto you for giving it. Whereas you only relieve their bodies, they feed your souls, as Prov. xi. 17. *The merciful man doth good to his own soul*, which is refreshed with the mercy which he sheweth to others.

Riches are a mere uncertainty, like unto a flock of birds in a man's field, who cannot say they are his because they sit there, 'for they take unto themselves wings and fly away.' Now in dealing with things uncertain, it will be your wisdom,

1. 'To make them as sure as you can.'

2. 'To make the best use of them that you can.'

1. What greater wisdom than to make sure ? And what better way imaginable to make sure your estate, than by putting it into good hands ? And what safer hands than the hands of the Lord ? Put them into the hands of God's poor, and you thereby put them into God's hands.

As in a state politic the Lieger ambassadors that are sent abroad to lie in foreign kingdoms,secure our peaceable state at home : So what we disperse and send abroad to the poor, secureth the rest at home. For, as the poor beg of thee, so they beg of God for thee, that he would preserve and bless thy store : their devotions are sent up to heaven for thy security.

2. ' And what better use can you make of your riches, than by bestowing a part of them upon the poor and needy ?' It being the chief end of God's giving more of this world's goods to some than to others, that they who have the greater store should give out thereof to them who are in want.

By communicating of our riches to the poor, we shall make them our friends, both to give evidence for us of the truth of our faith and charity, and to beg a plentiful return upon us : This is the advice of our Saviour, Luke xvi. 9. ' Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations.' Where, by mammon, our Saviour intendeth the abundance of this world's goods, which he called mammon of unrighteousness, because ordinarily by worldly men it is unrighteously used. This he hinteth, that his disciples might be the more wary about it, and the more careful of making themselves friends thereof, that is, so to use their riches by relieving the poor, as the good works done by them may give testimony of their faith and charity, which is the part of friends. Friends are ready to give good testimony of one another.

Surely, rich men have a price in their hands, wherewith to purchase to themselves a good inheritance, had they but hearts to make use of it. Though charity pretend not to any merit *ex congruo*, or *condigno ;* yet will it be plentifully recompensed by God both here and hereafter.

I hope you will pardon my zeal in pressing this duty of charity so much upon you: I do assure you, it is not out of any design to take any thing from yourselves, and children, but only to shew you ' the surest and safest way of thriving in the world ;' and how you may entail God's blessing upon your children, and so secure unto them the portion which you leave them.

The apostle knowing how backward rich men especially were to all works of charity, adviseth Timothy (1 Tim. vi. 17.) not only to commend unto them the duty, but to command it. The expression of the apostle is very observable, He doth not say *angellei*, *declare* unto them, but *parangellie*, *charge* them that are rich in this

world, as they love their lives, and would save their souls, to be rich in good works. As one wittily glosseth upon those words of the apostle. If God should charge the rocks, they would send forth water: If the stones, they would become bread: If the ravens, they would feed Elijah: If the quails, they would victual the camp: If the clouds, they would rain down food from heaven upon his poor people; will you be more rocky than rocks? more stony than stones; more ravenous than ravens? more senseless than birds? more empty than clouds?

If you be rich in this world's goods, and be not rich in good works, talk not of your faith, for there can be no true faith without good works, James ii. 17. Neither tell me of your religion: for there can be no true religion in you, so long as you make no conscience of this duty. Pure religion, saith the apostle James, chap. i. 27. (*is this*) 'To visit the fatherless and widows in their afflictions,' and you never learned other religion of us.

The Lord indeed giveth us leave to eat and to drink and to cheer up our hearts by partaking, in some measure of that portion he hath bestowed on us: but he never allowed us to keep all unto ourselves, or to spend it in the gratifying our sinful lusts, but commands us to set apart some portion of our estate, for the relief of those for whom nothing is provided.

Shall I yet again need to tell thee, that thy liberality to the poor cannot bring any loss to thine estate, seeing, the more thou givest, the more thou shalt receive? It is fabled of Midas, that 'whatsoever he touched was turned into gold.' But it is no fable nor fancy, that the hand of charity can do it; can extract grace out of your goods, righteousness out of riches, and heaven out of earth. The imparting of goods to such good uses, whilst it seems to impair, doth mightily improve what you have, to your most singular advantage. The more liberal any man is, the more likely he is to be a rich man: the mercy of God will crown his beneficence with such a blessing of store that he shall find, he will never be behind hand with him. It is nothing which the poor receive from him, in comparison of that blessing which he shall receive from the Lord. It may be, thou dost not find thy store thereupon presently increased, yet if thou diligently observest the passages of God's providence towards thee, thou wilt sooner or later find thyself abundantly reimbursed of all thy disbursements.

I told you before, that I am willing to do you a kindness: and that it may be a kindness indeed, I must farther tell you, not only what you should do, but 'how you must do it, that you may not lose your reward.' And if you would make sure to be gainers by whatever you thus lay out, observe the following directions.

I. 'Give yourselves to the Lord, and with yourselves, all that ever you have, to be so laid out, whether upon yourselves or others, as he doth appoint and require.'

2 Cor. viii. 2. The apostle boasting of the Macedonian Christians, and of the riches of their liberality, tells us, ver. 5. 'That they first gave themselves to the Lord.' He that will not give himself to the Lord, is like to give but little else. And, if he should give all that he had, and only withhold himself, God will not accept, nor reward it. God will have nothing of thee, if he may not have thy heart.

Give yourselves for servants to the Lord, to serve him with your spirits first; and then with all that you have. Make over yourselves to God in Christ, to be his covenant servants; and thenceforth count and say of yourselves, as the apostle teacheth you, 1 Cor. vi. 23. 'I am not mine own, but must henceforth glorify God with my body and my spirit, yea, and with all that I have, which are his.'

He that would serve the Lord with his spirit, will as readily serve him with all that he hath. God that hath given us his Son, how 'will he not with him freely give us all things,' Rom. i. 32. And that man, that hath given God his soul, will keep back nothing from him.

Friend, thou sayest thou art the Lord's, and hast devoted thyself to him; thou hopest that thou art Christ's, and hast joined thyself in covenant unto him, resolving to be his disciple: but, which way runs thine estate? Whose house is this, these lands, and this money which thou hast? are these the Lord's too? How is it then, that thy lusts have so much of them at their service? That thy pride hath so much, and thine appetite so much; or, that they are all impropriated and kept by thee to feed thy covetousness? Is all thou hast the Lord's? How is it then, that thou begrudgest, or thinkest so much of every little that he calls for from thee? Thou, who wilt not in every case part with so much as God calls for, art either a liar, or a robber. Either thou didst not give all to God, when thou saidst thou didst, and then thou art a liar; or, if thou didst give all, and yet will not let him have what he calls for, but bestowest it elsewhere, then thou art a robber.

Obj. 'But some will say, must I give all I have to the poor, and so leave myself, and my family to be beggars? or, what else is your meaning, when you say, I must give all to the Lord?'

My meaning is, 'That you so give all to the Lord, as to resolve to dispose of your whole estate to such persons and purposes, as God orders and appoints you.'

Some others will here put in and say; 'But I am free and bountiful, and give great alms; I cast my bread upon the waters: I give a portion to six, and also to seven: I devise liberal things; I delight to shew mercy.'

Dost thou so? it is well thou dost. God's blessing on thine heart for it: it is great pity, that any liberal man in the world,

should lose his reward; and that thou mayest not lose thine, take this counsel of a friend that loves thee, see that thou hast sincerely given up thyself to God as his covenant-servant, and art a devoted disciple of Jesus Christ, and that these thy works of mercy, are done in pursuance of thy covenant, as a part of that service which thou owest, and hast vowed to thy Lord, whose thou art, and whose talents thou reckonest all thou hast. And look to this the rather, because it is possible, that men of great good works may be, as of little charity, so, of little faith also, which is that grace which entitles God to us, and all we do, and obtains our acceptance with him. First, by faith give thyself to him; and then by charity serve him with what thou hast; and then doubt not of a plentiful return.

II. 'Offer up your gifts upon the altar.' Give yourselves, and with yourselves, all that you have through Christ unto God. Let him be *your altar that sanctifies your gift:* it is through him alone you will be accepted, Eph. i. 6. 'He hath made us accepted in the beloved.' Let your 'souls be sprinkled with his blood;' and thereby washed from your blood, from your natural and contracted guilt, and pollution, and then they will be a gift acceptable to the Lord. Do not think you have no more to do, but to give yourselves as you are to the Lord: you have given yourselves to sin, and now, it may be, you think, you will give yourselves back to the Lord: but know, there is no more in it than so, Thou art in thyself a guilty and defiled soul, and God will have none of thee in this case: go to Christ first, and get him to cover thine unrighteousness, and to cleanse thee from thy filthiness, put thy wretched soul into his hands, and let him present it unto the Father.

And, whatever thou givest with thyself, *thine alms*, *thy bread*, or *thy flesh*, or *thy money*, that thou hast for his poor; put it all into the same hand, and let him present this also to the Father, for the use of his servants.

Friends, though I would have you givers, yet, I would not have you losers. I would not have you losers, either by *saving*, or, by *unprofitable giving*.

1. 'Be not losers by saving.' This is the next way to *lose all*, by thinking to *save*, and keep all to yourselves. 'He that will *save* his life,' that is, by not laying it down when God calls for it, *he shall lose it*. And, so 'he that will save his estate,' that is, 'By refusing to lay it out where God would have him, he is the more like to lose all that he hath.'

2. 'Lose not by unprofitable bestowing.' All that is bestowed unprofitably, as to thee, to whomsoever thou givest it, which is not given first through Christ unto God, and to his servants for the Lord's sake. It may be profit however to them, who receive it, but no profit to thee who givest. It is only what is given to God, and to men for God's sake, for which God becomes debtor.

III. 'Fetch all your alms out of your hearts. Draw forth thy soul to the hungry,' Isa. lviii. 10. Give what thou givest,

1. 'Out of a willing heart.'

2. 'Out of a compassionate heart.'

3. 'Out of a thankful heart.'

1. 'Out of a willing heart; give willingly,' 2 Cor. ix. 6. 'Every man as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give, not grudgingly, or of necessity, for God loveth a cheerful giver.' An alms-deed in Scripture is called a sacrifice, such a sacrifice, as is well-pleasing unto God, Heb. xiii. 16. *To do good, and to communicate, forget not; for, with such sacrifices, God is well pleased.* Now, all our Christian sacrifices are to be *free-will oblations.* An alms without a will, is a sacrifice without an heart, and will be rejected of God.

2. 'Out of a compassionate heart.' Get a compassionate heart, and fetch all thine alms out of thine own bowels. It is *the hard heart of men* that shuts up their *purses:* thou sayest, thou hast not to spare, thou wantest it thyself, or those about thee may want it: *No, thou wantest an heart:* and that is the reason that those that need, must want thine alms. A compassionate heart would find something, or other, for those that are in distress.

O get a compassionate and merciful heart. Hast thou received mercy, and wilt not thou be merciful? Dost thou hope for mercy, and wilt thou not shew mercy? Put thyself into thy poor brother's case a while, think how hard it is with him; think of his *hunger* and *nakedness*, of his *pressing straits* and *miseries;* let thy soul go into his house, and see *his naked walls, his cold chimney, his empty cupboard, his starving children:* and then think again, O how if it were thus with me! Ah poor distressed creatures; How are they *pinched* and *pined*, whilst I have enough and abound? O my *bowels*, How can you but yearn? O mine *heart*, How canst thou but bleed over such distressed ones? Hast thou nothing to help them? There is enough in my house, there is enough in my purse to yield them relief, but is there no alms for them in my heart? Can I have the heart to see them pine and perish, and do nothing to help them? Where are ye, O my bowels? Where are my compassions? O my soul help, and send portions to them for whom nothing is provided.

3. 'Out of a thankful heart.' Remember what God hath done for thee; Hast thou any sense or experience of his special love to thee in Christ? What should that produce? the sense of divine goodness in a way of *common providence*, calls for all due acknowledgement from us: but a *taste* of his 'paternal love in pardoning our sins, and justifying our persons, and instating us in eternal life and happiness, upon the account of his Son's suffering and dying for us;' this is, as the strongest motive to, so, the most command-

ing reason of, our charity or beneficence to our fellow-creatures, who stand in need of it.

IV. 'Let all your streams of love flow into the ocean.' My meaning is, 'Let all be done to the glory of God.' This must be your last end to which all must be directed, as the apostle charges, 1 Cor. x. 31. 'Whether you eat or drink;' I may add, or whether you give to eat, or to drink, 'or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' Let this be chiefly in your eye, and your heart, 'that God may be glorified.' Other subordinate ends there are, as 'the refreshing of the needy, the adorning our holy profession, the edification of others by our good example;' but all at last must end here, that God may be glorified.'

Take heed, your end be not to glorify yourselves. As worms breed in the fairest fruit, so pride and vain-glory are apt to creep up out of the best duties.

V. 'Let your works of charity be done in humility, giving unto God the honour of them, by acknowledging, that as what you have bestowed on the poor, you first received from him: so, it was his goodness to give you an heart to give any thing out of your abundance toward their relief.' Yea, you ought to be ever jealous over yourselves, lest there hath been some hypocrisy and self-seeking in your works of charity, acknowledging, that you are so far from meriting heaven and 'salvation by your good works;' that if God should deal with you according to the rigour of his justice, he might cast you into hell, for that pride and hypocrisy, which cleaves to your best works.

VI. 'Let your works of charity to men be accompanied with prayers, and thanksgivings unto God.' Thank God, that he hath put you amongst the givers, and not amongst the receivers; it being 'a more blessed thing to give, than to receive:' that he hath put you among the givers, and not the withholders: that he hath given you an estate to give, and an heart to give.

VII. 'Give out proportionably to what God hath given unto you,' 1 Cor. xvi. 2. The apostle adviseth the Corinthians to give, 'as God hath prospered them.'

Rich men therefore ought to be *rich in good works;* for God expecteth fruit answerable to the seed which he soweth. Hath he abounded to you in this world's goods? you ought thereupon to be abundant in good works towards others: your pounds are expected, where the widow's mites are accepted.

Having given you some *directions* for the *manner* of bestowing your alms; I shall briefly shew you the means how to attain to this grace of Christian charity.

Now the means I shall prescribe, shall be,

1. 'Such as tend to the bringing your hearts to be willing to this duty.'

2. 'Such as shall tend to the helping of you for the better managing of it.'

First, 'For means to bring your hearts to be willing to set upon this duty, take these.'

1. 'Oft call to mind, and imprint in your memories the manifold precepts in the Scriptures, requiring this duty at your hands. As also, the many gracious promises God hath there made for the encouragement of his people thereunto;' and thereupon reason thus with thyself, *What? Hath God* commanded me, (Deut. xv. 10.) 'to give unto my brother according to his necessity? to cast my bread upon the waters?' Eccles. xi. 1. And, hath our blessed Saviour commanded me, Luke vi. 38. 'to give unto the poor?'

And, hath the Lord, for my encouragement thereunto promised, 'that he will bless me in all my works, and in all that I put my hand unto, prosper me in my trade and calling? That my barns shall be filled with plenty? That what we shall give or lend unto the poor, he will pay us again with interest? That though I cast my bread upon the waters,' where it may seem to be lost; 'yet, I shall find it after many days,' it shall certainly be returned into my bosom with increase? And, hath my Saviour for my encouragement promised, Luke vi. 36. 'That if I give unto the poor, it shall be given unto me again, good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, running over?' Then certainly, 'there is no such compendious way to thrive and prosper in the world, as by my liberality to the poor.'

2. 'Prefer heaven, and the things of it, before this earth, and earthly things.' Though the temporal reward which I have so much insisted on, be a great encouragement, yet, the greatest encouragement, is the spiritual and eternal reward that the Lord hath promised. And, that this may be the more prevailing encouragement, 'learn to esteem and prize things spiritual and eternal, above all things that are but temporal.' Suppose, it should so fall out, that you should never receive in kind what you bestow, yet, count those temporal things put off at the best rate, which you receive in things spiritual and eternal. Value grace and glory above all the treasures of the earth, and count yourselves to grow rich men, according to your abounding in grace, and your evidences for glory. And esteem it an unthrifty saving, and holding in, where you have an opportunity to improve in your inner man, by expending of your outward substance.

Till heaven be valued above earth, this great argument encouraging to acts of bounty and mercy, will lose its efficacy. When God says, 'Cast thy bread upon the waters for thou shalt find it again after many days;' the worldling will be ready to demand, but, how shall I find it? In what way shall it be returned me? Shall I have *bread* for *bread*, or *money* for my *bread*, or *houses* or *lands* for my *money?* probably thou mayest. But, suppose not so,

yet it shalt be better than so, thou shalt have in grace, what thou partest with in bread or money: thou shalt reap in heaven, what thou sowest on the waters.

Go, fool, and learn better what God is, and what his everlasting mercy is; let the lasting treasures, the durable riches be more prized and valued by thee; and this will stop thy mouth, and silence thine heart from such vain reasonings.

2. For the means tending to help you for the better managing of it; take these following.

1. 'Either follow the example of the primitive saints, in setting apart something every Lord's day out of the former weeks gettings.'

Or, 2. 'Devote unto God a certain portion of thy yearly incomes for charitable uses.'

That the former way of setting apart something every Lord's day for the relief of the poor was the practice of the primitive Christians, is clear from that of the apostle to the Corinthians, 1 Cor. xvi. 1, 2. 'Now concerning the collection for the saints, as I have given order to the churches of Galatia, even so do ye. Upon the first day of the week (which is the Lord's day) let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him.' This way and course concerns such in special who live upon their daily labours.

But though the scripture doth not determine the exact proportion to be set apart for good works, yet doth it command us, 'to give out proportionably to what God hath given unto us; to open our hands wide to the necessities of the poor; to be rich in good works,' and the like. Yea, the scripture doth commend unto us the examples of very bountiful Christians; of Dorcas, who is said to be 'full of good works, and alms-deeds which she did,' Acts ix. 36. and of Cornelius, who is said to give much alms, Acts x. 2. and of the Macedonians, who are said, 'to give to their power, yea, and beyond their power,' 2. Cor. viii. 3. It likewise commendeth unto us the example of Jacob, who in testimony of his thankfulness unto God for what he should bestow upon him, vowed the tenth thereof unto God for pious and charitable uses; as, Gen. xxviii. 20, 22. 'And Jacob vowed a vow unto God, saying, of all that thou shalt give me, I will surely give the tenth unto thee.'

Mr. Stock in his funeral sermon at the burial of the Lord Harrington, speaking of his charity, declared, that in his life-time he gave the tenth part of his yearly revenue to the poor. Mr. Gataker in his funeral sermon at the burial of Mr. John Parker, merchant, and citizen of London, speaking of his charity, saith, that 'at his first effectual call, among other things he then resolved upon, this was one, to set apart every year a tenth of his gain for the relief of the poor and needy; and that God from that time abundantly advanced his estate.' And questionless, if such merchants, who usually insure their goods upon their apprehension of danger at

sea, would sincerely promise unto God (in testimony of their thankfulness unto him) the tenth of what should come safe into their hands, they might receive far greater returns than they do.

In the life of Dr. Hammond, written by Dr. Fell, I find this expression; 'the rate and sum of what the Doctor devoted, was the tenth of all his income, wherein he was so strictly punctual, that commonly the first thing he did, was to compute and separate the poor man's share.' And how his stock increased, notwithstanding his abundant giving out to the relief of others, the history at large declareth. The like I read in the life of Mr. William Wheatly, minister of Banbury, how for many years he set apart the tenth of his yearly comings in, both out of his temporal and ecclesiastical means, and that 'his estate prospered the better after he took that course.' To these I could add many more out of the lives of good and charitable men, and out of several funeral sermons which are printed and published; and could name multitudes of men now living, who have devoted the like, and greater portion out of their estates for charitable uses; and are ready to attest the truth of this discourse, 'That they are no losers, but great gainers in temporals, by what they have given to the poor.'

Mr. Richard Baxter in his learned and useful piece called, A Christian Directory, Part the 4th. fol. 195. of the *quota pars*, what proportion is meet for most men to devote for charitable uses, whether the tenth part of their increase be not ordinarily a fit proportion? hath this expression:

'Though the proportion of the tenth part is too much for some, and much too little for others; yet for the most part, I think it as likely a proportion as it is fit for another to prescribe in particular.'

2. 'Be careful on whom thou bestowest thine alms;' for by giving to such common beggars who are able to work, and yet are so lazy that they will not work, but would live by the sweat of other men's brows: I say, by relieving such, we shall both maintain them in their idle and wicked life; and they who are truly poor, and ought to be looked upon as the proper objects of our charity will be neglected, or at least scanted of that which of right belongeth to them.

I am not against the relieving of all beggars, some of them I know are blind, others lame, aged, and past their work; these impotent poor, in regard of their present condition, are objects of charity; but not the impudent poor, who have strength enough to work, and will not, those canting vagrants, who are the burden of the earth, and shame of the kingdom, for these I have no charity: Neither had the apostle St. Paul, who towards God's poor was full of compassion; but for the Devil's poor, he gave this command, 2 Thess. iii. 10. 'That if any would not work, neither should he eat;' that hunger and necessity might drive them

to labour. Erasmus mentions a kind of mercy meetest for such, it is *misericordia puniens:* Surely the *whip* is more their due, than *food:* Bridewell to entertain them, than an *alms-house.*

III. Another means for the attaining this grace of Christian charity, is this; 'Be earnest with God in prayer, that he would be pleased to bestow upon thee that adorning and enriching grace of charity, and accept thy offering. This sacrifice, as it must be offered up to heaven, so it must be fetched from heaven. The gift of a merciful and charitable heart, is one of those gifts that come down from above, even the Father of Lights, James i. 17. If thou receivest not this gift from God, thy poor brother is like to have no gift from thee. Now it must be thy prayer that must fetch down this gift from God.

Having thus shewed you the means on our part to be performed for attaining and exercising this grace of charity; I shall close this discourse with answering two or three objections.

Obj. 1. Some object the greatness of their charge, the number of their children, who must be cared for, and thereupon have little to give to the poor.

Ans. 1. 'Hast thou many children, thou oughtest the rather to be charitable, that thereby thou mayest entail God's blessing upon them, which is the best portion, and surest inheritance thou canst leave them;' that will secure their stock, and improve their store; whereas unmercifulness to the poor will entail a curse instead of a blessing, upon the persons and estates of thy children.

2. 'Thou who objectest the number of thy children as a plea for thy parsimony, how justly may God then lessen the number, and so take away this excuse, by taking thy children from thee.'

3. 'Suppose thou hast many children, it may be half a score, reckon God for one besides; give unto him a child's portion;' I mean, bestow upon the poor, for his sake, as much every year, as one child stands thee in; give unto them a child's portion, and I dare boldly say, thou wilt not be the poorer, but rather a great gainer. For thereby wilt thou procure God's blessing upon thyself and children, which in truth is all in all; and without which, all is like to come to nothing, as we see by daily experience; which made St. Austin say, 'That which thou givest out of thine estate to charitable uses, will be no loss to thy children, but rather a great advantage.' Yea, the spirit of God in setting forth the happiness of a merciful man, saith, his children shall fare the better for his goodness and bounty; as, Psal. xxxvii. 16. 'He is ever merciful, and lendeth, and his seed is blessed;' that is, God will bless his children, not only with spiritual, but also with temporal blessings.

2. *Obj.* Many professors, in these days, are very barren in good works.

Ans. 'Fruitless and uncharitable Christians may make a pro-

fession of religion, but questionless they are no sound Christians, nor sincere professors.' For most certain it is, that 'the elect of God do put on bowels of mercy and compassion;' as the apostle speaketh, Col. iii. 22. And therefore an uncharitable Christian is a mere contradiction. For who is a Christian but he who conforms himself to the law, and life of Christ? The substance of whose law is charity, and whose life was spent in going about doing good, some way or other, to the souls and bodies of men and women.

Whosoever therefore having this world's goods, seeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, and will not communicate any thing considerable towards his necessities; let his profession be never so specious and glorious in the eyes of men, yet certainly he is but a rotten professor, and dissembling hypocrite in the sight of God. In Matth. xxv. 23. we find that liberality to the members of Christ is made the special touchstone of true faith and godliness. For they are the charitable persons, who at the great day of judgment will appear to be the sheep at Christ's right hand, and shall hear that joyful sentence of absolution? 'Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you before the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye clothed me; I was sick, and ye visited me; I was in prison, and ye came unto me.'

And on the other side, all unmerciful men who have not relieved Christ in his members, whatsoever profession of religion they have made here in this world, yet at the last day will appear to be the goats set on Christ's left hand, and shall hear that dreadful sentence of condemnation, 'Depart from me ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil, and his angels: For I was an hungered, and ye gave no meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink; I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not; sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not.'

So much shall suffice for this point of doctrine.

A word or two for my brethren's sake of the *first doctrine* raised from the foregoing verse, which is the principal point there intended by our Saviour; which was this,

17. 'That all needful succour, and good entertainment ought to be afforded in special to the ministers of the gospel.'

Our Saviour in commending objects to our charity, in the first place, mentioneth *prophets*, and the *righteous ones*, saying, 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward:' and then addeth, 'He that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man, &c.

Indeed, so general must be the extent and emanation of our charity, that it must not exclude any who are in want and distress.

For though we may, and ought to put a difference between men upon whom we bestow our charity, yet ought we not to restrain it from any men who are in want; but must act the *grace of charity* towards them who have not the *grace of faith.* Yea, 'we ought to do good unto all,' as the apostle exhorteth, Gal. vi. 13. 'But especially unto them who are of the household of faith.' And among them, chiefly to the *ministers of Christ.* So as this object of charity, a *prophet*, is not here to be taken exclusively, but by way of *eminency* and *preferment:* Ministers are *before* and *above others*, with more *readiness* and *cheerfulness* to be ministered unto.

The people of Israel, we read, were commanded once and again not to leave nor forsake their Levites, especially when they were reduced into any straits and exigencies; asDeut. xii. 19. and xiv. 27. Then much less should the *ministers of the gospel* be left and forsaken by the people of God, when they lie under any want or distress.

The examples of God's people that have gone before us in the performance of this duty, are many, both in the Old and New Testament. It is recorded to the perpetual praise and commendation of Obadiah, that he hid the prophets of God, by fifty in a cave, from the cruelty of Jezebel, and sustained them with food, and ministered all things necessary unto them, 1 Kings xviii. 13. We read likewise how the widow of Zarephath nourished the prophet Elijah in her house for many days and years, even so long as the famine continued, 1 Kings xvii. 15, 16. The kindness of the good Shunamite to the prophet Elisha, is largely reported, 2 Kings iv. 8, &c. 'It fell on a day that Elisha passed to Shunem, where was a great woman, and she constrained him to eat bread;' that is, to refresh himself with food. 'And so it was, that as oft as he passed by, he turned in thither to eat bread.' Having found good entertainment, and hearty welcome, he did the oftener visit the family. 'And she said unto her husband, Behold, now I perceive that this is an holy man of God which passeth by us continually, let us make a little chamber, I pray thee, on the wall, and let us set for him there a bed,and a table, and a stool, and a candlestick.' Under these,other necessary accommodations are comprised. The good woman desired of her husband, 'that a chamber might be made for the prophet on the wall;' perhaps not that she wanted room in her house to lodge him in, but because she considered, that the noise of a great family might be some disturbance to the prophet's study and devotion; therefore thought it convenient to provide such a chamber for him, where he might be more retired, and have the free ingress and egress,that by those accommodations he might be encouraged the oftener to take up his lodging there.

Rom. xvi. 2. It is set down as the heighth and crown of Phebe's good works, that she had been 'a succourer of the apostle Paul in his wants and straits.' And in 2 Tim. i. 16. we read how One-

siphorus refreshed and relieved the apostle in his suffering condition, and *was not ashamed of his chain ;* that is though he were a prisoner, and under restraint for the gospel's sake ; yet Onesiphorus owned him, shewed him all respect, succoured and relieved him in that his low condition. Gaius likewise, a godly, wealthy citizen of Corinth, is famous for that kind entertainment and succour which he gave to the apostle, and the church with him, Rom. xvi. 23.

It is recorded to the commendation of king Edward the Sixth, that he afforded all needful succour, and good entertainment to Bucer, Fagius, and other divines, when they fled into his kingdom, by reason of the troubles in their own nation. And Beza in his epistle, *ad Regem Jacobum*, maketh an honourable mention of a liberal collection of the church of Scotland, sent to the *French ministers*, who were banished *Religionis causa*.

Here are fair copies for us to write after. And indeed why are these things written, and left upon record to posterity, but for our learning ? Not so much for our *admiration*, as for our *imitation*, that we might follow their steps, and write after their copy ; which St. Paul testifies of the Macedonians, 2 Cor. ix. 2. 'How that very many of them were stirred up, and provoked to a liberal contribution to the poor saints at Jerusalem, by the forwardness and zeal of the Corinthians.' And St. Austin confesseth, that 'the examples of God's servants did burn and consume his own lukewarmness, and their fervent zeal set an edge on his devotion.'

To these examples, I shall add a few *Reasons* for the better enforcing this duty upon you.

Reas. I. 'Because ministers being supported, are like to be most serviceable to the church of God.' They are Spiritual Fathers, to beget men unto Christ. They are his *ambassadors*, and stand in his stead to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom, sent forth to be reconcilers betwixt God and this sinful world, to pray and beseech them to be reconciled unto God, 2 Cor. v. 20. Their work is to bear the name of God, to publish the salvation of God before the world : 'to open the eyes of the blind, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified.' In which respect *ministers of the gospel* are more useful and serviceable in their generation, than either *lawyers*, *physicians*, or *tradesmen*, which yet are useful enough.

1. *Lawyers*, indeed may be a means of settling your right in your goods and lands : But *ministers* of settling your right to your heavenly inheritance.

2. *Physicians* may cure the maladies of your bodies ; but *ministers* are sent to cure the diseases of your souls.

3. *Merchants*, and all sorts of tradesmen may replenish a land with all manner of necessaries for this life : but *ministers* only bring

in such heavenly and spiritual treasures as spring up into the everlasting treasure.

So that by supplying their bodily wants, you do comfort and refresh the souls of many. And what better charity imaginable, than by relieving the temporal wants of some few, to further the everlasting salvation of many? Oh what cause will their souls have to bless God to all eternity for your charity, who have been converted by the ministry of those whom you have refreshed and supported in their work!

Reas. II. 'Another reason may be taken from the consideration of the quality of the persons for whom I am pleading:' They are not so mean as outwardly they appear. They whom you behold so poorly clad, walking so dejectedly, being destitute of many outward comforts, are men endowed with many singular prerogatives and privileges, not only above the rest of God's people, but likewise above the most glorious angels.

Compare them first with the people of God; they are called the Lord's sheep, these *the shepherds of the flock*, Ezek. xxxiv. 2. They children in God's family, these Spiritual Fathers, who by the seed of the word beget men unto God, 1 Cor. iv. 15. Therefore the Spirit of God vouchsafeth them this dignity, to be called *sunergoi tou Theou, fellow-labourers with God.*

Concerning angels; true it is, that they and ministers are *fellow-servants*, Rev. xxii. 9. But yet ministers have sundry prerogatives above them.

1. 'Angels rejoice at the conversion of a sinner,' Luke xv. 10. But by the ministry of prophets, sinners are converted unto God, Acts xxvi. 18.

2. An angel was sent to Cornelius, to advise him whither to go to be instructed; but a minister instructed him in the way of life, Acts x. 6, 34.

3. Was the word of reconciliation ever committed to angels? to ministers it is committed, 2 Cor. v. 18. It is observable, that the embassage of ministers is not simply *angelia, a message*, but *euangilion, the gospel*, the gladsome tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, 'into which the angels themselves do desire to look and pry,' as the apostle Peter expresseth, 1 Pet. i. 12. The Lord hath also committed to his ministers the administration of the sacraments, which are the seals of his covenant, whereby all his precious promises are ratified, and confirmed unto us. So that as in respect of the rich treasures of God's word committed to their dispensing, they are the Lord's treasurers: So in respect of the sacraments, they are the *keepers of his great Seal.* If these officers be great under mortal princes, what are they under the King of Kings?

I have taken the liberty, in a few words, to set forth some of the privileges of the ministers of the gospel; partly for the com-

fort and consolation of many of them under misery and poverty, and partly for the incitation of others to afford them that *double honour* which the apostle calls for, 1 Tim. v. 17. Namely, the *honour of respect*, and the *honour of maintenance*, that they suffer them not to sink under their burden, but afford them some seasonable succour and relief, suitable to their present wants and necessities.

Reas. III. 'Because ministers are oftenest exposed to sufferings and distresses, and so have most need of relief.' The bow of the adversaries of religion is bent most against the teachers and leaders of the people. That word, 1 Kings xxii. 31. 'Fight neither with small nor great, save only with the King of Israel,' is often changed into, 'Fight neither with small nor great, but only against the prophets of the Lord.' Smite the shepherds, and the sheep will be scattered. Experience enough tells the world who they are that are set in front of the battle; and who are the first that fall by the power of the adversaries. And 'who should be most in the eye of charity, but those that are most in the eye of malice?'

Besides for whose sakes is it that ministers are so often brought so low? Is it not for your sakes, whose souls are dearer to them than their own substance? Is it not often upon this account, because they will be faithful to you, and will not keep silence, nor cease to watch over you; and to warn, and to instruct you from day to day?

Might they not save themselves more whole, if they would hold their peace, and let the devil alone to have his will of you? For your sakes no doubt it is, that much of their sufferings come upon them; and shall they be forsaken by you? The truth is, it is upon this account a piece of *justice*, as well as a piece of *charity*, to relieve and succour them; and so you may do two good works in one; the same alms may be both a work of righteousness, and a work of mercy.

Reas. IV. 'Your gratitude to God requireth a cheerful performance of this duty from you. For wherein can you otherwise make a suitable return to God, for what he hath plentifully conferred on you, than by contributing some of your temporals to them, from whom ye reap so much in spirituals? The Lord of his free grace and rich mercy hath abounded to you in these outward things; 'He hath given you richly all things to enjoy.' Yea, as the Psalmist speaketh, 'He hath loaded you with his benefits.' Now, not to return some part of your estate to him, who hath given you all that you do enjoy, were ingratitude in the highest degree: and therefore, how doth it concern you often to put the Psalmist's question to yourselves, 'What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits towards me?' Psalm cxvi. 12. Surely one kindness deserveth another; as God hath been bountiful to you, sure you are very unworthy, if you be not bountiful to his.

And, how do you think he will take it at your hands? Will he ever say to you, 'Well done good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful, a good steward of my many gifts?' Or, is it all one to you whether he say, 'Well done, or not?'

And in regard, you cannot directly and immediately requite him who is uncapable of being enriched by us, ('My goodness extendeth not to thee,' Psalm xvi. 2.) it will be your wisdom to express your thankfulness to God, by being kind to his poor relations. Now, who are nearer to God than his ministers? whom he hath appointed to stand in his room, to declare his mind unto his people; who are, as the mouth of the people unto God, so, God's mouth unto the people; who are the 'messengers of the Lord of Hosts,' by whose ministry there is peace concluded, and reconciliation proclaimed between God and man. Surely, what kindness you shew to these, he takes as done unto himself, Mat. xxv. 40.

Reas. V. 'Your relieving the faithful ministers of Christ, may in a sense be said to have something more in it, than if you should shew your charity to himself, in his own person, as being a sign of greater love.' It is but an ordinary thing to return kindness to our dearest friends, but to extend our good will to their relations, or servants, for their sakes, is an evidence of much greater love. For, if upon their account only we do good unto these; how much more would it be judged we should be ready to do it unto themselves, if they stood in need of our help? and so will Christ look upon it: our bounty expressed to his ministers, he will receive as an evidence of our more abundant love unto him, which he will in no wise forget, nor suffer to go unrewarded.

Reas. VI. 'Such as relieve the poor ministers of Christ, shall have their blessing, the benefit of their prayers unto God.' They will bless you however, though you have no blessing for them. Though you have not an alms for them, yet they will have a prayer for you. But, their bowels being refreshed by you, you may expect that their hearts will be the more enlarged for you; and this will be a far greater kindness than you can bestow on them. Your gift cannot be worth their fervent prayers. In this respect, it is much better to give, than to receive; because he that receives, hath but a perishing alms; he that gives, receives an abiding blessing, the blessing of prayers.

Herein did the apostle St. Paul make a large requital to Onesiphorus, for the kindness he shewed to him in his imprisonment; as you may read, 2 Tim. i. 16. 'The Lord give mercy unto the house of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me; and was not ashamed of my chain.' As if he had said, I received much comfort and refreshment from Onesiphorus when I was in prison; for the which I beseech the Father of all mercies, to shew mercy unto him, and his, by blessing him, and his whole family, with all blessings, both temporal, spiritual and eternal. And, indeed, what

blessing can that man want, who hath a share in many minister's prayers? which are available for the obtaining of all good things at the hand of God; as for themselves, so, for others. Yea, the very work of charity doth bespeak a blessing from God. As the blood of Abel is said to cry to the Lord for a curse or vengeance upon Cain; so every act of charity crieth to God for a blessing upon the charitable. Our very acts of charity, in relieving the wants of the poor, and refreshing their bowels, do pray and cry to God for his blessing upon us, and ours.

Reas. VII. 'Your charity to them will be hereafter rewarded with everlasting glory and happiness in the kingdom of heaven.' This reason our Saviour himself giveth in these words; 'He that receiveth a prophet in the name of a prophet, shall receive a prophet's reward;' whereby is meant, that surpassing and excellent weight of glory, which cannot be expressed by the tongue of men or angels. Yea, by the reward of a *prophet*, seemeth to be implied the highest degree of heavenly glory. For, Daniel xii. 3. it is said, *That they be wise*, that is, The righteous, who are endowed with true spiritual wisdom, being lightened by the Spirit of God, *shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; but they that turn many to righteousness;* which is the work of prophets, *shall shine as the stars for ever and ever.*

Now by your bounty to the *prophets of God*, you may come to partake of their reward. So that, it is your own concernment to contribute liberally towards their relief. Not that your charity to them doth merit that glorious reward; but in regard of the promise of God made to all those, who do exercise the same towards his ministers, it shall be truly given unto them.

For a word of *Application.*

'Oh how should the consideration of these things stir up the hearts of all, especially such as have a blessing in their hand, an estate to give, to draw forth their souls, and reach forth their hands to the supply of these wanting servants of God.' Surely, this is a time wherein Christ is trying your love to him, by your charity to them. Are you not concerned to make proof of your love to Christ? Have you not an opportunity before you, and a loud call from heaven, to prove it in this way? Can you not hear him that said once to Peter, John xxi. 16. *Lovest thou me? feed my sheep.* Can you not hear the same voice calling to you, *Lovest thou me? feed my shepherds.* Sure, thou art very deaf to the voice *of the providences of this day*, if thou do not hear this call. And, will you prove that you have no love to Christ? What do you else, if you suffer his to starve, when you have wherewith to feed them? Beloved, it is through God's free grace, and rich bounty, that you enjoy such plenty of outward good things, when many of his ministers are in great want. What you have, you have received from him. Is it not then most just and reasonable, that you

should return back some part of your estates unto God, by relieving his ministers, in testimony of your love and thankfulness unto him for what you have? Hath God given you hundreds and thousands? and, will not you part with a few pounds or shillings when he calls aloud unto you for the same, as now he doth in these days? though the earth be his, and the fulness of it, yet (in a sense) he hath need sometimes of your estates. Mat. xxv. 35. Christ telleth you of his wants, and sheweth you how, and when he is relieved.

Friend, Wilt thou say this? Wilt thou in the presence of the Lord come to this gracious resolution? Or canst thou yet find in thine heart to deny thy Lord, and continue to be as hard-hearted, and close-handed, as thou wert wont to be? Dare not to say, Lord, my goods are mine own, I owe thee nothing: dread such thoughts, that how much soever thou hast, the servants of Christ shall be nothing the better for it.

Once again consider, thou art put to this choice, either to accept of the counsel of Christ, or to reject it; which of the two wilt thou do? If thou resolvest not on mercy, and liberality, thou rejectest the word of the Lord; and if thou rejectest his word, thou rejectest the Lord, and therein sayest, He shall be no Lord for me. But, if thou acceptest, then go, and do accordingly: let the hunger, and the thirst, and the nakedness: the wants and distresses of his servants feel in that relief they shall receive from thee, that thou art a man to whom the Lord hath not spoken in vain. Let them feel it presently, and let them feel it constantly; this year, and the next year, and the next, even whilst they have need to receive, and thou hast it by thee to give. This do, and the Lord "accept thee, remember all thy offering, and accept all thy sacri-"fices; the Lord hear thee in the day of thy trouble; the name "of the God of Jacob defend thee: The Lord grant thee accor-"ding to thine own heart, and fulfil all thy counsel: The Lord "remember thee with the favour he beareth unto his children, "and visit thee with his salvation."

FINIS.

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